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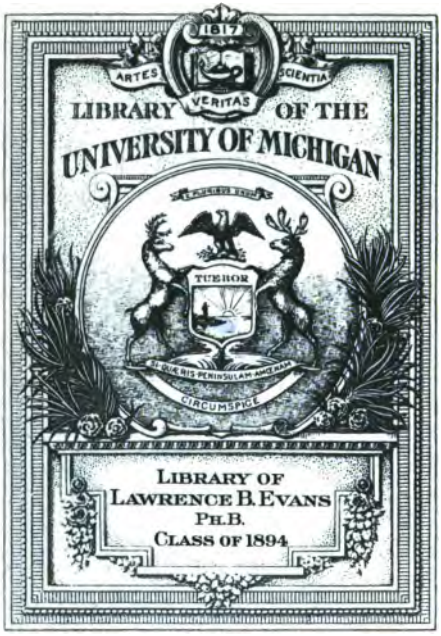

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VOL. 3491.

THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK.

BY

TIGHE HOPKINS.

IN ONE VOLUME.

TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

By the same Author,

AN IDLER IN OLD FRANCE . . . . 1 vol.

THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK

BY

TIGHE HOPKINS,
AUTHOR OF "AN IDLER IN OLD FRANCE," ETC. ETC.

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PROLOGUE.

"TELL me, I pray thee, thy name," cried Jacob, wrestling with the dark adversary at Peniel. So have successive generations of writers striven with that plaguy ghost of history, the Man in the Iron Mask, and have vainly entreated his name. But it has at last been spoken. The mask has dropped from him, behind which he lurked, it seemed, impregnably.

The solution of this diplomatic mystery of two centuries, the "ultimate dim Thule" of so many speculations, brings forward no new appellant. It disposes finally of a host of pretenders (whose claims have been, however, for the most part, quite abandoned in this century), but it seeks the tragic honours of the mask for no fresh candidate. This may be a disappointment to some, for what is most fabulous in this history has at least been richest in dramatic surprises; but to others, and especially to those who have followed the progress of research in France, and who are not unacquainted

with the earliest true surmises on the subject, it will be rather gratifying to discover in the victim of Louis XIV.'s vengeance that Mattioli who was first put forward a hundred and thirty years ago—whose pretensions to the mask have been canvassed, debated, approved, assailed, rejected, renewed, and are now reduced to demonstration.

History has allowed a long innings to guesswork, tradition, and invention in all that has concerned the Man in the Iron Mask. But the truth is that she has been ready to come into her own, to yield up the secret of the Mask, almost any time since the opening of the century. The right kind of research, and the dogged patience which nothing but Q. E. D. will satisfy: so much she asked in payment. The unlocking of Archives has left few problems of history unresolved; and when, after the Revolution, those curious documents were disclosed which Louis, his ministers, his ambassadors, and his gaolers had penned in full security, it was certain that the true tale of the Masked Man must some day get the benefit of print. Louis XIV. had his revenge of Mattioli. History has had hers of Louis XIV. I cannot think that the story misses much in human interest by the elimination of the large element of fable; but the fact remains

that to a reader of old French history it presents no extraordinary feature. The mask itself excepted (and the unimportant character of that too celebrated disguise is hereafter shown), the fate of Mattioli was neither exceptional nor uncommon. It accorded, if not entirely with French jurisprudence, at all events with the administration of French justice. It was of a piece with the system under which political and other offenders always might be, and usually were, dealt with: arbitrary arrest, arbitrary imprisonment, and arbitrary punishment, with or without the form of trial by a court, packed as Richelieu generally packed his, to ensure conviction. Trial and sentence were both dispensed with in Mattioli's case; but in the days of the *"bon plaisir royal et ministériel,"* which were long before and long after the days of Richelieu, those formalities were easily forgone. So lightly were subjects of all degrees imprisoned under the monarchy, and so readily forgotten in prison, that when a prisoner died after years of captivity, the very Minister by whose order he had been confined, and who had been informed of his demise, would often request to be told the reason of his detention. The close of the nineteenth century has shown us that justice in France

can still be a thing of very small security to a prisoner at the bar; and the epoch under consideration in this volume begins in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. That a needy and obscure Italian diplomat and adventurer, having tricked, flouted, and infuriated a sovereign of the temper of Louis XIV., should end his days in the Bastille, is not a matter to excite even the most trifling degree of wonder. Still, the documents to be offered to the reader present, with some new lights, a remarkable picture of more than one phase of imprisonment under the old *régime;* and in Saint-Mars we have the typical State gaoler of the age, incorruptibly faithful to his charge, inflexible almost to cruelty, callous to the sufferings of his prisoners, and in his private aspect a miser growing richer and richer at the expense both of the prisoners and of the public treasury.

The credit of the identification of Mattioli with the Mask belongs, as one thinks it should belong, to France. The beginnings of what constitute history on this subject —history more or less exact at the outset—are set forth in the Introduction, and more minutely in the second part of the volume. Delort, whose *Historie de l'Homme au Masque de Fer* is seventy-five years old, was the first

to publish a really useful collection of documents. Elsewhere I have explained how, owing to the incompleteness of the series he had access to, his system came to grief. Forty-five years later appeared Marius Topin's *l'Homme au Masque de Fer,* which is still as a whole the best and most complete narrative extant. But even Topin left something undone; and his proof is not absolute. His is the merit, nevertheless, of having first spread the light upon the whole field of enquiry; and he it was who brought the case for Mattioli triumphantly to the front again, when the one signal error of Delort and his contemporaries seemed to have left it for ever in uncertainty. Had the investigation ceased with Topin, an impartial critic of his work might well have decided that unless and until this hypothesis were completely overset, Mattioli should be received as the Man in the Iron Mask. The crowning proof, decisive and irrefutable, might be to seek; but testimony and inference alike fastened the mask upon Mattioli. This hypothesis has not been overset. It has been carried further, and confirmed. The solution of M. Frantz Funck-Brentano, ratified by the common assent of scholars in France, has satisfied every doubt. Scarcely glancing at the history of the affair,

summarising all in a few pages of irresistible and translucent argument, he has laid the great enigma bare.*

There is a Legend of the Iron Mask, and there is a History of the Iron Mask. Of the Legend, only a small portion (and that, perhaps, the most ridiculous) is known to the generation of to-day: with the History, the detail of it, this generation is almost of necessity unfamiliar, since no volume has yet embraced the whole. Legend and History are here brought together and contrasted. The best and the most foolish stand side by side; the incredible transmutations of the Legend, and the precise facts of the true and rather simple History. A certain political transaction, not of the highest importance, nor of the most unusual kind, took place two hundred years ago in France. Out of this transaction has arisen the most extraordinary fable of modern times. But truth has done her tardy office; and the moral, somewhat worn, speaks for itself.

* I refer to the chapter, "L'Homme au Masque de Fer," in M. Funck-Brentano's *Légendes et Archives de la Bastille*, Paris: Hachette et Cie., 1898. Second edition 1899. Crowned by the French Academy. An excellent translation from the pen of Mr. George Maidment has since been published by Messrs. Downey and Co.

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THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK.

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

THE SPHINX OF FRENCH HISTORY.

An arrival at the Bastille, September, 1698, has been the cause of more discussion than any other event in the notable history of that fortress. It was Thursday, 18th of the month, and three of the afternoon. Armed men on horseback surrounded a closed litter, from which, when all was sure, descended a meagre, silent figure, Saint-Mars, Louis XIV.'s most trusted gaoler. He had come to the Bastille for the first time, having just received its command. The entry of a new governor would naturally be of no small moment to the staff, whose future lay between his hands; but curiosity was immediately transferred from Saint-Mars to the prisoner who accompanied him. The prisoner's face was hidden by a mask of black velvet, a disguise in which no one had ever before been brought to the Bastille. The un-

happy man was already a mystery, before even he had set foot within the prison which was to be the third and last of his long captivity. No one knew him, who he was or what he had done that Saint-Mars should have him in this extraordinary keeping. Together, Gaoler and Mask, they had traversed France from far Provence, travelling always in this secure fashion, by silent ways. At the *château* and domain of Palteau, a property of Saint-Mars, a halt had been made; and the peasants of the estate who came out to meet their lord preserved and passed on as a tradition the memory of that strange visit. The mask, once seen, seems to have haunted the dullest fancy. In itself it was no way remarkable; a little black velvet mask: what affected the mind was the circumstance that the person who wore it was a prisoner. *This* was something entirely unwonted. The peasants observed that when the table was served the prisoner was always kept with his back to the window, they noted the pistols at the hand of the vigilant Saint-Mars, and the two beds ranged together in the sleeping-room.

The officers of the Bastille had been apprised, and the King's lieutenant, Du Junca, whose careful diary will

be opened, had prepared for the prisoner "the third room of the Bertaudière tower."

Five years later, after one day's illness, November 19, 1703, this prisoner died in the Bastille. His end was so rapid that he did not receive the solace of the sacrament; the chaplain "exhorted him a moment before he died." As dusk fell on the next afternoon the drawbridge was lowered, and a sorry funeral passed out, which took its way to the graveyard of the church of St. Paul: behind a rude coffin, two turnkeys of the prison. A furtive, perfunctory burying, scarcely even decent; into his hasty grave, probably by lantern-light, the turnkeys unknown lowered the unknown dead, and that was the end. On the church's register was inscribed the name of Marchioly. In the Bastille they had known him as *the prisoner from Provence.*

This is that mysterious creature, the problem of whose identity has bewitched, impassioned, and embroiled six generations of enquirers. The incontestable facts are these: that in 1698 Saint-Mars conducted to the Bastille a prisoner who died there five years later; that he was known in the Bastille as the prisoner from Provence; that his unique, unhappy memory survived his death in

the prison, and overran the world. These are the simplest data of the problem that lies before us. Twenty-four years (1679—1703) in the obscurity of prison; at the end of that period, an obscure, untended death-bed, and a hurried and obscure interment; some further years of oblivion, and then there arises and steals from that graveyard of St. Paul this ghost that shrouds its face, intent upon an odd revenge, the torment and insoluble conundrum of historian, fabulist, novelist, dramatist, essayist and gossip—the Sphinx of French history: the Man in the Iron Mask.

The sole question to resolve is: Whose was the face which the mask concealed?

The happy acumen of Topin instructs him at once as to the false path on which his predecessors, with scarcely an exception, had set forth. Voltaire had said: *"What is doubly astonishing is this, that when the prisoner in question was sent to the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite, there did not disappear from Europe any personage of note."* The Mask had lain fifteen years in the dungeon of Pignerol before they transferred him to Sainte-Marguerite, but Voltaire, than whom never a writer has approached this theme with so complete a

lack of information, did not take that fact into account. The statement just brought forward stimulated and obsessed all minds. Who of note *did* vanish from European scenes between the date of Mazarin's death (1661) and 1703? That must be the way to seek the truth about the Iron Mask! Thus was begun the "monstrous brood" of all those theories and systems which have darkened counsel on this subject. In pieces of sundry sorts, waiting to be sifted and joined together; in official despatches, epistles, reports, memoranda; in certain live pages of the Bastille's archives, the true history of the Masked Man was lying all this while unheeded, unthought of. The hunt was elsewhere—anywhere, everywhere but where the quarry couched. They were all wanting to come upon the track of that "person of importance" who *must* have been thrust out of sight while Louis XIV. was on the throne! Was it a brother of Louis? Was it Vermandois? Was it Monmouth? Was it Beaufort? Was it Fouquet? The least resemblance found or imagined, the mask was clapped on, and a new discovery given to the world. "Never an Indian deity," says Paul de Saint-Victor, "has undergone so many metempsychoses, so many avatars." To one incarnation

of the Mask succeeds another and another; system topples upon system; but the Sphinx keeps hold on the secret. During thirty years (says Topin) Voltaire, Fréron, Saint-Foix, Lagrange-Chancel and Père Griffet were cutting and slashing one another most brilliantly, in a joust in which each adversary found it easier to demolish the opinions opposed to him than to maintain and win acceptance for his own. In Topin's day fifty-two writers, sharing among them twenty-five different hypotheses, had essayed to look behind the mask, and Vicomte Maurice Boutry extends the list to sixty, not embracing the legion of anonymous contributors to periodicals and dictionaries.* Would the problem ever be expounded? This interminable series of defeats—system and system built up in years and shattered in an hour—ended by producing one curious but not unnatural result. Since no one could identify the Mask, might it not be that the Mask had never lived? Here was perhaps some

* In how many works on the Bastille there is mention of the Man in the Iron Mask, I cannot pretend to say. The library of the British Museum contains 40,000 treatises on this famous dungeon of pre-Revolutionary Paris. Thus, reading at the impossible rate of one a day, it would take above a hundred years to exhaust the collection.

prodigious myth, and nothing more. Critics less sceptical, but despairing of the truth, averred the question beyond human ken. "The history of the Iron Mask," says Michelet, "will probably remain for all time in obscurity." And Henri Martin: "History is debarred from giving judgment on what will never pass beyond the confines of conjecture."

But the curiosity of the world has never been appeased. Irritated, checked, baffled, and a hundred times defeated, it has come again to the quest. The itch spread far; England, Germany, and Italy helped France to confuse the issue, to draw the mask a little tighter over those inscrutable features.

A secret well kept during many years is greatly liable to distortion when it begins at last to emerge from the comfortable dark of legend and tradition. Indeed, it may become twenty or more dissimilar histories before it has been properly divulged. At one era and another the secret of the Iron Mask has been five-and-twenty secrets at the very least. In the lifetime of Louis XIV. it was preserved with a cunning and fastness scarcely to be believed. Was ever gaoler so mum as Saint-Mars? That mute, uneasy shadow, perpetually plagued by fears

for the safety of his prisoners, now with an eye at the keyhole and now crouched among the branches of a tree to spy unseen, never in four-and-twenty years gave up the secret which he held inviolable by order of the King. In the fifteen years the prisoner was captive at Pignerol, in the four years he lay at the Isles, in the five that brought his tragedy to a term in the Bastille, no subordinate officer of either place had learned so much as his name. From Du Junca's journal we shall see presently that even the King's lieutenant got it by mere hazard after the prisoner's death. And the Court was not better informed than the Bastille. The omniscient Saint-Simon, the Greville of France, had never an inkling of the matter. That unbridled gossip, the Princess Palatine, who spent half the day at her desk inditing scandal to her family and friends abroad, was completely wide of the mark.* Supposed at one time to rank among the prerogatives of the crown, history has proved that this

* "I have just learned," writes Madame from Versailles, October 22, 1711, who was the masked man who died in the Bastille. His wearing a mask was not due to cruelty. He was an English lord who had been mixed up in the affair of the Duke of Berwick (natural son of James II.) against King William. He died there so that the King might never know what became of him."

was not the case with the sombre secret of the mask. Madame Campan will show us that it was unknown to Louis XVI. Napoleon expressed a lively regret at not being able to satisfy his curiosity. Louis-Philippe discussed the problem frequently, but confessed his ignorance of the solution; and if certain other sovereigns pretended to the knowledge, the contradictions of their statements sanction the inference that they were not more correctly instructed.*

Here, then, indeed was a Secret of the State consummately preserved, not only during, but after, the lifetime of the monarch whose interest it was to safeguard it. *"See that no one knows what becomes of this man."*** Such was the private peremptory order of Louis XIV. to his minister, Abbé d'Estrades; and he was obeyed. Clearly, therefore, this would be a hard secret to come at, until the sole right method—the search for, and disentombing of, the documents—was chanced upon.

But both the writers on this mystery and their readers,

* Topin.

** *"Il faudra que personne ne sçache ce que cet homme sera devenu."* Louis XIV. to d'Estrades: April 28th, 1679.

in England as in France, have displayed, for the most part, a rather singular perversity. It would be fastidious, if not altogether idle, at this day to make inquest on the motives which led so many authors of erudition, ingenuity, and exceeding patience to beguile the public with the notion that they had found beneath the mask the features of Vermandois, or Monmouth, or Beaufort, or the Armenian patriarch Avedick—nay, even of Molière himself! Assuredly the scandal-hunters were not for nothing in this affair, and no doubt some private vengeances were served by certain theories which offered not the veriest semblance of reality.* In some other instances, when mere malignity has not motived the enquiry, the prepossessions of authors with fixed ideas have lured them far, and left them, in the end, the victims of irreducible dilemmas. A conjecture is reared into a system; such facts as favour it are adopted as readily as the facts in opposition are rejected. When the list of famous men

* Thus, there were those who pretended to discover under the mask a son of the Duchess Henrietta of Orléans and Louis XIV.; a son of Henrietta of Orléans and the Comte de Guiche; a son of Christine of Sweden and Monaldeschi; a son of Marie-Thérèse (wife of Louis XIV.) and the negro servitor whom she had brought from Spain; a son of Cromwell, etc.

comprised within the historical period is exhausted, the period is audaciously extended; and a complacent public has been asked to accept some effigy of an Iron Mask alive in 1706, three years after the attested death of the prisoner of Saint-Mars. Avedick, the Armenian patriarch, whose claims to the mask were advocated by the Chevalier de Taulès, was not carried off until 1706. M. Emile Burgaud fixed on General Vivien Labbé de Bulonde; but "M. Geoffroy de Grandmaison published in the *Univers* of January 9, 1895, two receipts signed by General de Bulonde, one in 1699, when the Masked Man was in rigorous isolation in the Bastille; the other in 1705, when he had been two years dead."* It would seem, indeed, that scarcely an author has come quite single-minded to this task. There need be no general implication of bad faith; it is sufficient to suggest that the majority of these defenders of systems not defensible were anxious first to get their literary profit out of a topic of perennial interest, and unwilling afterwards to admit the truth that must undo them. It is not, however, in this way that things are proved, this is not the way of science; and perhaps no subject perplexing to

* Funck-Brentano.

history has remained longer in doubt from the common disregard of the just historical method.

But the offence in chief, the mischief of the fable which has run throughout the world to the hurt of a woman and a queen, should be attached. It attaches immediately to Voltaire. Here, indeed, we must conclude, was malice prepense. First he prepares his audience by an attractive hint or two; retires then, and watches the effect. Nothing could be better; we are all agog: as much more of this as you please. So, without the least embarrassment on the author's part, the horrid hoax is launched, and starts forthwith upon its travels. It was a piece of quite unscrupulous sensationalism, skilfully imagined, but—as there will be occasion to show—elaborated with little art, and with less than no regard for consistency. None the less, there were in it all the elements of an abiding popularity; it had the romantic quality, it was royally scandalous, it disclosed a seeming State secret of capital significance, it soiled the honour of a queen: for a hundred and fifty years it has represented to the many the whole entrancing truth of the Man in the Iron Mask. But the proofs? Ah! there, indeed, we are speedily confounded. M. Voltaire ap-

parently forgot that history, sooner or later, would be wanting to know what he meant by it—this titillating fable of her Majesty's amours and the semi-royal child resulting from them, who was to end his days as the prisoner of the mask. On Voltaire's part not an ounce of real proof was ever offered, and the researches of scholars have clearly demonstrated that none ever could have been offered, since none was ever in existence. Of all the systems of the mask this one is the most denuded of testimony. The utmost rigour of investigation has failed to show that Anne of Austria had any part in the affair of the Iron Mask; on the other hand, it has shown conclusively that she had none. At the time it was begun the queen had been dead nearly twelve years. Let it be added that this baseless hypothesis has "long been abandoned. The last writers who adhered to it date from the revolutionary period."*

But the public partiality for Voltaire's egregious version is perhaps not wonderful. A king's brother in the

* Funck-Brentano.—In fiction, the system which is an extension of Voltaire's has enjoyed, of course, the prepotent championship of Dumas, in the novel beloved of Louis Stevenson, *The Vicomte de Bragelonne.*

mask—it was really a very fine notion! The accessories, too, were all so captivating to the fancy. If that damning resemblance to Louis XIV. existed (a pity Voltaire could not contrive to prove it!), the necessity for the mask is patent; and pray let it be, not the "light Venetian mask" of velvet which in reality it was, and which was of universal use among the upper classes in Italy, but the right melodramatic article, the "iron mask" with the steel chinpiece, a mediæval instrument of torture, which could not have been borne for a week; and let the poor Highness wear this day and night for four-and-twenty years.* *This* was something like romance!

Nor was this all. Who parts willingly with the other adjuncts which time has grouped about the indomitable legend?—the "boundless deference" shown

* I have never seen the old-fashioned play on the subject of the Mask, which, no longer known to London, is still faring up and down the country; a version possibly of the once-admired piece, *Le Masque de fer*, by Fournier and Arnould, first given at the Paris Odéon in 1831. But, cycling through Canterbury in the falling light of an October afternoon, I observed the placid thoroughfares of that city aflame with pictures of the drama. Here was the Man in the Iron Mask with a vengeance. The mask itself as depicted on the posters had the appearance of a small boiler.

to the prisoner, Saint-Mars never seating himself in his presence, addressing him "with bared head," serving him with his own hands on silver plate, and supplying him with "the most luxurious raiment his fancy could desire"; the notable tale of the silver dish which the prisoner flings out of window, after carving a message on it with a knife, and which nearly costs his life to the fisherman who restores it; or the version of Père Papon, in which a shirt of fine linen, with a letter written on the inside, takes the place of the dish: who yields up willingly these lively figments, long as they have gone by the board?

It is enough to recall the reception, cool in some quarters and in others hostile, which those scholars met with who first untied the knot. Few problems of history have held so many vested interests, and no vested interests in a problem of history have been more tenaciously fought for. What innumerable pens, French and alien, were mortgaged in this affair! Baron Heiss's affirmation, the first true note upon the Mask in French, was received "with indifference." *

Voltaire, an old man now and jealous high priest of

* Vte. Maurice Boutry.

his own inspired myth, was moved to peevishness. "Why," he cries, "they have even given him an Italian name!" Heiss's epistle was merely in the nature of a suggestion, but at last the right word had been uttered. The unravelling remained to do, however, and for a long time it was a task not less thankless than laborious: the true heir was no Prince of the blood, and there was no investing him with fine linen or feeding him on silver dishes. Voltaire's pretender, "young, and with features of rare nobility and beauty" (though no one ever saw them!) was still the fairy hero of the multitude. Came Topin finally, and the fairy prince got his *coup de grâce.* Not talent and not genius will ever again make a Canterbury Tale of the Man in the Iron Mask. History lighted her lamp at Topin's hands, and was avenged. M. Funck-Brentano has shown conclusively that Topin was right, and has furnished the proofs that were still to seek.

But will the facts uproot the fable? In historical circles in France, discussion on the question of the Mask is at an end, but, for the general public, there are, as M. Sardou says, "The guides, the showmen to reckon with—those faithful guardians of legends, whose propa-

ganda is more aggressive than that of scholars."* And among ourselves the Voltaire tractate is still occasionally reprinted; Dumas is very much alive; and audiences at country theatres are perennially regaled with the spectacle of the suffering prince, his head encased in an iron boiler.

Meanwhile, for those who will read it, the true tale as revealed by history is not bereft of interest or romance. The treason of the rash Italian, who flouted Louis the Magnificent in the face of Europe, and was so terribly despoiled for the same, needed only its Dumas, or our own dear Stevenson, to be borne to the rim of the universe. In any event, it seems good to speed the Man in the Moon, and admit in his place the corporeal Man in the Mask.

* Victorien Sardou.—Preface to Funck-Brentano. M. Sardou adds: "When you reflect that every day, at the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite, the masked man's cell is exhibited to visitors by a good woman who retails all the traditional fables about the luxurious life of the prisoner, his lace, his plate, and the attentions shown him by Saint-Mars, you will agree that a struggle with this daily discourse would be hopeless. And you would not come off with a whole skin!" —*Ibid.*

PART I.

THE MAN IN THE MOON.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEATH OF VERMANDOIS.

It will be of profit to remember:—

1. That the mysterious prisoner was no myth.

2. That, while quite unknown, legend was already busy with him before his death.

3. That the hypotheses of the 18th century are without the support of history.

4. That since, from the era of the French Revolution, access to the Archives became possible, these hypotheses have been one by one abandoned.

5. That the expression "iron mask"—"*masque de fer*"—does not occur in any official document: it is a "mask," a "velvet mask," or a "black velvet mask."

6. That the tradition of a royal secret, passed on from king to king, is disproved.

7. That the Legend owes everything to the imagination of men of letters, that it is entirely at variance with

facts, and that it has held its ground by reason mainly of the prevailing voice of Voltaire, and the enduring fascination of Dumas.

We can proceed now to determine the source and origin of the Legend. In 1745 there appeared at Amsterdam, under the auspices of the *Compagnie des libraires associés*, a small romance entitled "A Contribution to the History of Persia."* It was published anonymously, and the authorship has remained a secret. Several critics have assigned it ("not without some reason," says M. Funck-Bretano) to Madame de Vieux-Maisons; others to the Duc de Nivernais; and others again to the Chevalier de Rességnier, an officer in the Guards, whom Madame de Pompadour had sent to the Bastille. General Iung inclines to Paul Lacroix's opinion that Voltaire himself was the author. The identity of the author is, however, quite unimportant. What is of interest is, that this slender novel was very soon the talk of France. It said the first public word about that hidden prisoner of Saint-Mars whose misfortunes were just beginning to engage attention.

* "*Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de Perse.*"

"*Cha-Abas,*" * says the anonymous author, "had a legitimate son, *Séphi-Mirza,* ** and a natural son, *Giafer.* *** The children were almost of an age, but their characters agreed in nothing. *Giafer* was never tired of saying that the French were greatly to be pitied for their subjection to a monarch who had not the wit to rule them. These treasonous words were carried to *Cha-Abas,* but the father was stronger in him than the king, and he could not bring himself to exert his authority over a son who had abused his tenderness. At last, *Giafer* so far forgot himself as to strike *Séphi-Mirza* in the face. This was at once reported to *Cha-Abas,* who, trembling for the culprit, and willing even now to overlook the offence, could not but regard it as an attempt against himself and his crown; and, as the affair had scandalised the court, he could no longer yield to the promptings of a father's love. He constrained himself, and summoned the most intimate of his courtiers; showed them his grief, and demanded their voice upon the matter. For a crime of

* Louis XIV.

** Louis the Dauphin.

*** Louis de Bourbon, Comte de Vermandois.

this magnitude, they declared, the laws of the State awarded death. What a verdict for the doting father! Then, one of the ministers, more sensible than the others of the affliction of *Cha-Abas*, proffered a means of punishing *Giafer* without putting him to death. "Let the prince," said this counsellor, "be sent to the army which was then on the frontiers of *Feldran.* * Shortly after his arrival let it be given out that he had sickened of the plague, which would be a sure way of detaching from him his friends and admirers, and, a few days later, let it be announced that the malady had carried him off. Then whilst, in the presence of the whole army, his obsequies should be celebrated in a manner befitting his birth, he must be borne away by night, and taken secretly to the citadel of the *Isle of Ormus.*" ** This advice was very generally approved, and above all by the afflicted father. Persons faithful and discreet were chosen for the conduct of the affair; and *Giafer,* with a splendid retinue, set forth for the army. There it fell out as the plot had been ordered, and while all the camp lamented that untimely fate, the unhappy prince

* Flanders.

** Isles of Sainte-Marguerite.

was hurried by privy ways to the *Isle of Ormus*, where they delivered him into the hands of the governor, whom *Cha-Abas* had commanded that no one should ever obtain sight of his prisoner. One attendant only, who shared the secret, was taken with the prince; but this man dying by the way, the escort slashed his face with their poniards that he might not be recognised, and left him stripped and stark upon the road. When *Cha-Abas,* to reward the governor's fidelity, bestowed on him the command of the citadel of *Ispahan,** *Giafer* was removed there. At the *Isle of Ormus,* as in the citadel of *Ispahan*, he was compelled to wear a mask when, by reason of sickness or for any other cause, it was necessary to let him be seen."**

Such was the story which set all minds in France to work upon the enigma of the prisoner of Saint-Mars. "No sooner had it appeared," says Iung, "than the problem of the mysterious prisoner became the question of the day. Refutations, criticisms, pamphlets, letters, memoirs, and ever new solutions succeeded one another rapidly from 1750 to 1790." The "History of

* The Bastille.

** *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de Perse.*

Persia" continued to be credited even after Voltaire's more romantic nonsense had seduced the multitude. Let us examine its pretensions. It represents, as Topin observes, a kind of compromise between the impossibility of accepting the imaginary hero of Voltaire and the desire to see in the Masked Man some person of exalted birth.

In Vermandois we have at all events a live man, and the natural son of a King to boot. His mother was that beautiful and sympathetic Louise de la Vallière who touches us more closely than any other of the heroines of the court of Louis XIV. Yielding with reluctance to the passion of the King, la Vallière was no courtesan and no fortune-hunting adventuress. Strong in her very weakness, she subjugated without art or wile the most imperious sovereign in Europe, and from the torments of a love, ceaselessly combated, she passed to the rigors of a penance courageously endured for thirty years. Sweetest and most captivating figure of the great reign, she has engaged the hearts of posterity. *

The graces of the mother were innate in Louis de Bourbon, Count of Vermandois. Tall and finely formed,

* Topin.

he possessed la Vallière's instinctive gift of pleasing. Kindly and generous, he had his own peculiar ways of conferring favours, and the most fastidious of men, it was said, could never reject or be offended by his benefits. From a child he had the love of Louis XIV., who was as proud as he was tender of him. In the army, he won the officers as completely as he had won the common soldiers, and his personal courage was of the highest; with the troops in Flanders, on one occasion, he concealed a grave malady, that he might not miss his part in an attack. As if under the influence of that subtle warning which often strikes those whose death is to be premature, he seemed eager to ensure for his memory the renown of some signal act: but his day was too short for glory.

A posthumous celebrity of a most uncommon kind was, however, in store for him. Sixty years after his death, it occurred—Heaven knows how!—to the unknown author of these *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de Perse* to add to the too-brief life of the gracious Vermandois twenty years of captivity in prison, and to render his destiny sadder by presenting him as the incognisable victim of Louis XIV.'s tyranny.

What proofs, or failing proofs, what probabilities does the story carry? In the seventh volume of Mdlle. de Montpensier's interminable "Memoirs" there is a definite statement that Vermandois was under a cloud at court when he set out for the siege of Courtrai; that the King, annoyed about his gallantries in the town, and the company the young man kept, had banished him from the presence. There is no word of a quarrel with the Dauphin, or of a blow in the face, a scandal which could scarcely have remained unknown to Mdlle. de Montpensier, and one which, since she was no friend to the brilliant Vermandois,* she would not have scrupled to divulge. As for Vermandois's pretended disgrace, and the King's refusal to see him, we find that on the earliest rumour of his illness at Courtrai, Louis sends word that he is to be brought back to court as quickly as possible, "where he can be surrounded with every care."**

"Is there need," asks Topin, "to insist upon the impossibility of admitting that a son and heir of Louis XIV.

* "I was not sorry for the death of M. de Vermandois," she says in this same volume of the *Mémoires*.

** The King to the Marquis de Montchevreuil, Nov. 4, 1683.

could receive the gravest insult in the midst of the court, and no allusion be made to the fact by a single contemporary writer?" Further to diminish the probability of the tale, the author of the *Mémoires Secrets* shows us in Vermandois, that mirror of courteous chivalry, an unmannerly and treasonable cub, unable to keep his hands from the brother who was one day to be his king. Finally, the brothers are described as "*à peu près du même âge,*" whereas there were six years between them; Vermandois at the period of this display of ungovernable temper being but sixteen, while the Dauphin was already the father of the Duc de Bourgogne. The untimely death of Vermandois is a fact that cannot be disputed, nor is there in his last earthly moments, or in the transport of his remains to Arras, where they were interred, a circumstance which provokes the faintest degree of suspicion.

It was on the 6th of November, 1683, that the young Count took to his bed at Courtrai. He had been sickening for some days, but would not admit, so determined was he to take part in the attack on Menin, "where he gave proofs of the highest courage."

His fever increased rapidly; on the 12th of the

month Marshal d'Humières communicated his condition to the minister Louvois; on the 13th word was sent to the court. Three days later, on the 16th, it is announced* that the patient has just received the sacrament, and that *l'on n'espère plus que dans sa jeunesse.* On the second day from this, November 18th, the son of la Vallière died of malignant fever in the presence of Marshal d'Humières, the Marquis de Montchevreuil, and Lieutenant-General Boufflers. "In the camp, distress was general. They wept for the good he had achieved, and for the promises of greatness unfulfilled." Mademoiselle de la Vallière "is all day at the foot of her crucifix."

On the 27th of November, before an immense and brilliant crowd of witnesses, Vermandois was laid with pomp in the choir of the cathedral church of Arras. By the King's command, a requiem mass was said in the same place every day during the remainder of the year; and provision was ordered to be made for a solemn service, preceded by vigils, on the 18th of November, each year, "*à perpétuité.*" Doles were to be given to

* *Archives du ministère de la guerre.* De Boufflers à Louvois. Cited by Topin.

the poor of Arras on this day, "that they might pray for the soul's welfare of the Comte de Vermandois." Up to the year of the Revolution 1789, all these stipulations of the act drawn up with the chapter of the cathedral, in the name of Louis XIV., "were scrupulously fulfilled."

To sum up. If the amiable and chivalrous Vermandois struck the Dauphin, as the legend of the "Contribution to the History of Persia" maintains, the proof has not come down to us. If for this deed Louis XIV. condemned a favourite son to lifelong imprisonment, the proof is not less in request. The dispatches concerning the successive phases of the illness of Vermandois, his death at Courtrai, his burial in the cathedral of Arras, are in existence. And, as regards Louis XIV. (who held such things profoundly sacred), what an awful and most impious derision is in that pomp of burial, and in those masses celebrated during a hundred years, if the coffin in the choir were tenantless and Vermandois a living prisoner in the dungeon of Pignerol!

There is but to add that this version of the mystery, adopted by Fréron in 1768, and by the unknown author of the *Histoire du fils d'un Roi*, in 1789, has lain for above a century in well-merited neglect.

CHAPTER II.

THE ELDER BROTHER AND THE TWIN.

THE *système* Vermandois was a choice regale in its way, but a dish more delectable was preparing. The Legend was not to be world-famous till it had made of the Iron Mask a brother of Louis XIV. Of this system there were several branches. Thus, the Mask was:—

1. A son of Anne of Austria and some lover undiscovered.

2. A son of Anne of Austria and the Duke of Buckingham.

3. A son of Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin;

or

4. A twin brother of Louis XIV.

Later, under the First Empire, there were new and very elegant conceits. Taking up the theory of the twin brother, the Baron de Gleichen had asserted, and had been at pains to prove, "that it was the true heir to the throne who was put out of sight, to the profit of a child

of the Queen and the Cardinal. Having become masters of the situation on the death of the King [Louis XIII.], they substituted their son for the Dauphin, the substitution being facilitated by a strong likeness between the children."* The dire consequences of this hypothesis strike the eye at once: it nullifies in the most absolute fashion the legitimacy of all the remaining Bourbons.

After a period of repose in the shades, the ghost of the Baron de Gleichen awoke and stalked forth into the First Empire, where all the talents were probing the dust of the Man in the Iron Mask. Here is the contribution of the Baron's ghost to the bewildering topic of debate. "Louis XIV. had been a mere bastard, the child of foreigners. The lawful heir had been imprisoned at the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite, where he had married the daughter of one of his gaolers. Of this marriage a child was born, who, as soon as he was weaned, was despatched to Corsica, and there entrusted to a safe person, as a child coming of 'good stock'—in Italian, *Buona-parte.* It is from this child that the Emperor was directly descended. The true claim of Napoleon I. to the throne of France established by the Iron Mask!

* Funck-Brentano.

—How came the great Dumas to miss that great discovery?"*

Note has been made of the suggestion that Voltaire was the author of the unsigned "Contribution to the History of Persia." He affected to treat it in public as an "obscure, ridiculous pamphlet," but he was exceedingly quick to appreciate the interest it had aroused. Surely that tale of Vermandois and the Dauphin, and the fond King who would not slay his son, might be improved upon! Now Voltaire had, as Matthew Arnold says of Macaulay, "his own heightened and telling way of putting things;" and of that heightened and telling way of his there is no more effective illustration than the surmise upon the Mask with which he witched the world. People have gone on repeating it—not as surmise but as history—even to the present day. In how many minds does not the mention of the Man in the Iron Mask conjure up the image of a brother of the Grand Monarque? This story, nevertheless, is unsupported by any document that ever yet was vouched for; not in all the archives of France is there one single *pièce* to stay it on; nor will it tally (and this were indispensable) with

* Funck-Brentano.

the dates of the changing periods in Saint-Mars's career. In a word, from the day that the State papers of France became available, no seeker of the truth could continue his belief in the divination of Voltaire: so far as criticism was concerned it perished, accordingly, in the cataclysm of the Revolution.

Let us see how adroitly Voltaire went to work. In the first edition of his "Age of Louis XIV.," published in 1751, he wrote:—"Some months after the death of Mazarin, an event happened which is without a parallel in history. Moreover, and this is not less remarkable, the event has been passed over in silence by every historian. There was sent with the utmost secrecy to the castle of the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite, in the Sea of Provence, a prisoner unknown, of a stature above the average, young, and with features of rare nobility and beauty. On the way, the prisoner wore a mask, the chin-piece of which was furnished with springs of steel, so that he could eat without removing it. Order had been given to kill him if he ventured to uncover. He remained at the Isles until a trusted officer, Saint-Mars by name, governor of Pignerol, having been appointed in 1690 to the command of the Bastille, came to

Sainte-Marguerite to fetch him, and bore him thence—always in his mask—to the Bastille. Before his removal, he was seen in the Isle by the Marquis de Louvois, who remained standing while he spoke to him with a consideration savouring of respect. In the Bastille, the unknown was as well bestowed as was possible in that place, and nothing that he asked for was refused him. He had a passion for lace and fine linen; he amused himself with the guitar; and his table was furnished with the best. The governor rarely sat down in his presence. An old doctor of the Bastille, who had often attended this interesting prisoner, said that, although he had examined his tongue and the rest of his body, he had never seen his face. He was admirably made, said the doctor, and his skin was of a brownish tint. He spoke charmingly, with a voice of a deeply interesting quality; never complaining of his lot, and never letting it be guessed who he was. This unknown captive died in 1703, and was buried by night in the parish of Saint-Paul. What is doubly astonishing is this: that when he was sent to Sainte-Marguerite there did not disappear from Europe any personage of note. This was he, beyond a doubt, for observe what happened within a

few days of his arrival at the Isle. The governor himself laid the prisoner's table, and then withdrew and locked the door. One day the prisoner wrote something with a knife on a silver plate, and threw the plate out of the window towards a boat on the shore, almost at the foot of the tower. A fisherman, to whom the boat belonged, picked up the plate and carried it to the governor, who, surprised beyond measure, asked the man: 'Have you read what is written on this plate, and has anyone seen it in your hands?' 'I cannot read,' answered the fisherman; 'I have only just found it, and no one else has seen it.' He was detained until the governor had made sure that he could not read, and that no other person had seen the plate. 'Go,' he then said, 'It is well for you that you cannot read.'"*

* The reader will be interested in comparing with this the version which Père Papon gives in his *Histoire Générale de Provence.* Here, it will be observed, the issue is more tragical. Says Father Papon: "I met in the Citadel an officer of the Free Company, aged seventy-nine. He told me more than once that a *frater* of that company saw one day, under the prisoner's window, some white thing floating on the water. He brought it to shore, and carried it to M. de Saint-Mars. It was a shirt of very fine linen, carelessly folded, which the prisoner had completely covered with writing. Unfolding it, and reading a few lines, M. de Saint-Mars, with an air

It will be seen that Voltaire does not say as yet who his extraordinary prisoner was. "He observed the impression his story had produced. Then, growing bolder, he insinuated in the first edition of the 'Questions on the Encyclopædia' that, if the prisoner were masked, it was a precaution taken to prevent the recognition of a certain striking likeness. He still withheld the name, but every ear was straining now for some imposing revelation."*

It came at last, in the second edition of the "Questions on the Encyclopædia." This time Voltaire, afraid to captain his fantasy, took cover behind his publisher. The paragraph had better be translated at length:—

"The Iron Mask was without doubt a brother, and an elder brother, of Louis XIV., whose mother had that taste for fine linen with which M. de Voltaire has reenforced his case.** Reading the contemporary Memoirs

of great embarrassment, asked the *frater* if he had not had the curiosity to read it himself. The *frater* declared over and over again that he had read nothing; nevertheless, two days later, he was found dead in his bed."

* Funck-Brentano.

** "It was made to appear—although nothing has ever been

in which this anecdote of the Queen finds mention, I had not a doubt that this was her son, a conclusion to which various other circumstances had already guided me. It is known that Louis XIII. had long ceased to share the Queen's couch, and that the birth of Louis XIV., was the fruit of a happy accident. Here, as I believe, is the history of the affair: The Queen had come to persuade herself that hers alone was the fault which had deprived Louis XIII. of an heir. The birth of the Iron Mask undeceived her on that point. The Cardinal,* to whom she had confided her secret, saw where his advantage lay in it. He could shape it at once to his own profit and to the profit of the State. Satisfied, by what had occurred, that the Queen was able to give children to France, he arranged to bring her Majesty and the King together. But both Queen and Cardinal being equally persuaded of the necessity of concealing from Louis XIII. the existence of the Iron Mask, they

advanced in proof—that the Mask was addicted to the wearing of fine linen; and Anne of Austria, we know, was particularly fond of laces and embroideries. But this taste is not exactly confined to royal families, and is perhaps a little insufficient to convict a queen of adultery."—Vte. Maurice Boutry.

* Richelieu.

had the child removed in secret. Louis XIV. remained in ignorance of the matter until after the death of Cardinal Mazarin. Then, and not till then, did it come to the knowledge of the King that he had a brother living, an elder brother, moreover, whom his mother could not possibly disown, and in whom some signal likeness might not improbably declare his origin. Reflecting that this Prince, born in wedlock, could not, without the gravest consequences and most dire scandal, be pronounced illegitimate after the decease of Louis XIII., Louis XIV. could have fallen on no measure wiser or more just than the one which he adopted; and that measure, in addition, while securing his own safety and the tranquillity of the State, spared him an act of cruelty which a sovereign less conscientious and less magnanimous would have accepted as necessary."

"What unlikeliness, what contradictions, what abounding errors have we here," exclaims Topin, within the compass of a page or two! This strange unknown whom no one is allowed to look upon, whose doctor even may never see him unmasked, yet who is confidently asserted to be beautiful and noble of feature: Saint-Mars appointed to the Bastille in 1690 (eight

years before he received that command), and traversing all France to seek a prisoner for whom, during twenty-eight years, some other gaoler has sufficed: this mask with the steel springs which covers the prisoner's visage night and day without destroying his health: that beatific resignation to his lot, and unwillingness to disclose his identity, on the part of a prisoner who flings silver plates out of window after committing to them some history which all but sends the governor into an apoplexy: her Majesty's taste for fine linen, so extremely unfortunate, since it is presently to be transformed into invincible proof of the birth of an unlawful child: this Queen, again, who has been already three times enceinte, heaping herself with reproaches that she can give the King no heir: her infatuated resolve to share with Richelieu, a sworn enemy, the secret of a guilty intrigue: a Queen of France, in the momentous hour of childbirth, with no confidant but the prime minister: and these two tremendous events, the birth and stealthy removal of a royal child, so shrewdly dissimulated that not a single Memoir of the period has mention of them—these are among the first reflections which this amazing narrative suggests.*

* Adapted from Topin.

And now for the history, not less diverting and equally veracious, of the Twin. This is the invention wrought by the Abbé Soulavie into his apocryphal *Mémoires du Maréchal Duc de Richelieu,* first published in London in 1790. Written in a not inelegant French, we are asked to accept it as the composition of Saint-Mars,* who, incapable of a literary sentence, groaned over the spelling of a six-line despatch.

"The unhappy Prince whom I brought up," said the governor, "and of whom I had charge to the end of his days, was born the 5th of September, 1638, at half-past eight in the evening, while the King was at supper. His brother, now reigning as Louis XIV., was born at twelve noon, his father being at dinner. The pomp and ceremony which attended the birth of the King contrasted wretchedly with that of his brother, which was closely concealed. Louis XIII. was informed from the Queen's chamber that her Majesty was about to be delivered of a second child; and this double birth had

* "*Relation de la naissance et de l'éducation du prince infortuné soustrait par les cardinaux Richelieu et Mazarin à la société et renfermé par l'ordre de Louis XIV., composée par le gouverneur de ce prince au lit de mort.*"—*Mém.*, vol. III., ch. IV.

already been predicted to him by two shepherds, who had said in Paris that if the Queen should bring two Dauphins into the world, the State were lost. Cardinal de Richelieu, consulted by the King, replied that, "if two children were born, the second must be put out of sight, since he might one day claim the throne. Tormented by uncertainty as to what course he should follow, the King's distress was overwhelming when the pains of the second accouchement began." The twin was born, "daintier and prettier than his elder," and the midwife was charged with his safe keeping! Where the luckless infant was secreted we are not told; merely that dame Péronnette, the pearl of midwives, reared him as one of her own, and that he was given out for some nobleman's love-child: an ideally simple little method of disposing of a Child of France.

At first, it is the great Richelieu himself who undertakes the education of this untimely prince, destined, in the event of the Dauphin's death, to succeed to the throne. Then, to resume the legend so absurdly fathered on Saint-Mars, "the cardinal confided him to the governor, who was to bring him up as the son of a king, but in strict secrecy. The governor took him to his

own estate in Burgundy. The Queen-mother seemed to fear that if the birth of this young Dauphin became known the malcontents of the kingdom would rise in his behalf, because of the belief (held from certain of the faculty) that the last-born of twin brothers is the first conceived, and, in consequence, the rightful heir. Nevertheless, Anne of Austria could not bring herself to destroy the documents which established the birth of her son. At the age of nineteen, this State secret was discovered by the prince while spying in a casket of his governor, where he came upon letters of the Queen and of the Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin. . . .

"The governor wrote to the Court asking for instructions, and both he and his charge were ordered to be imprisoned," &c.

Soulavie had had for his principal supporters Dulaure, in his *Histoire de Paris* (1821); Fournier and Arnould, in the drama put forward at the Odéon; Alexander Dumas, in the *Vicomte de Bragelonne;* Levasseur, in a volume of the *Mémoires pour Tous* (1835); and the historians Sismondi and Michelet.

These, then, are the two main branches of the system which sets up the Iron Mask as a brother of

Louis XIV.; Voltaire's prevailing story of an elder brother, with Mazarin at the putative father; and Soulavie's creation, more romanesque, if possible, of the twin who vanished in the instant of his appearance. With these is linked, and will fall naturally into line, the story of the Queen and Buckingham. Topin sets out upon his refutation of the entire system by asking when and in what circumstances this most equivocal brother of Louis XIV.—whether elder or twin—could have contrived to slip unseen into the world? His birth has been placed at three different dates. Choice may be made, for instance, of 1625, after the famous visit of the Duke of Buckingham to France; of 1631, following on that grave sickness of Louis XIII., which had given rise to fears that his hated brother, Gaston d'Orléans, might be called to the throne; or, lastly, 1638, eight or nine hours after the birth of Louis XIV. If the refutation is to be decisive, it should leave no doubt upon the mind that the birth of another Dauphin was as mythical as his subsequent misfortunes.

CHAPTER III.

THE INFATUATION OF BUCKINGHAM.

It was in May, 1625, that the brilliant Buckingham went to Paris, charged by Charles I. to conduct to England his bride Henrietta Maria. Charles's ambassador had been welcomed in advance by Louis XIII. "I do assure you," that King had written, "you will be regarded here, not as a stranger, but as a true Frenchman, for indeed you are one at heart." And Richelieu had said to the Marquis d'Effiat: "M. de Buckingham will find in me a brother." Indeed, Buckingham knew France well, and had acquired in that country not a little of the grace and gloss of manner which have been worth so much to his memory. We are not at this day to bestow much praise upon this elegant and handsome trifler, no fit counsellor for kings, though he had been counsellor to two; but the courtier shone very fine in him, and he was an eminently splendid figure in a pageant. He made a superb entry at the Court of

France, "with more pomp and glitter than if he had been King," says La Rochefoucauld. Madame de Motteville adds that the Duke seemed to have treasuries at command, and all the Crown Jewels of England to heighten the splendour of his wardrobe. In the first volume of the Hardwicke State Papers is an account of the "vastly rich cloaths" he took with him, "the number of his servants, and of the noble Personages in his train." A suit of purple satin, "embroidered all over with rich orient pearls," was valued at £20,000, and another of "white satin uncut velvet, set all over with diamonds," at four times that amount. Paris was amazed at the prodigality of his display. Certain jewels on the costumes that he changed incessantly were sewn with such ingenious lack of skill that they detached themselves and rolled away, "and when they were brought back to him the Duke would by no means receive them." Great noblemen were in his suite; he had seven grooms of the chamber, thirty chief yeomen, and twenty-two cooks, with pages, footmen, grooms, huntsmen, outriders, musicians, and watermen. Three coaches lined with velvet and smothered in gold lace had eight horses and six coachmen apiece; and the Duke had his barge, with twenty-

two rowers "all in sky-coloured taffety." What with his attendant knights, and the pages of the knights, his train numbered six or seven hundred persons. He was the hero of the town and of the court.

Dazzled, it may have been, by his own magnificence, giddy with the flatteries that were lavished on him, Buckingham at the Court of Louis XIII. could see none worthy of his own homage but the young, charming, and vivacious Queen. He fell violently in love with Anne of Austria, who was now between twenty-four and twenty-five years of age. The Queen, being a Spaniard, was a natural coquette; and Madame de Motteville, than whom no one knew her better, says that Anne of Austria was not disposed to blame a certain open and honest gallantry *"où on ne prend aucun engagement particulier"* —in other words, which involves no notion of compromise. "She accepted with a certain kindness and no seeming surprise a passion which, while evoking memories of her own country, and even pleasing her *amour-propre*, offered no peril to her virtue." If, however, the numerous *fêtes* in Buckingham's honour brought him often in the presence of the Queen, the Court was witness of their meetings; and though this was a circum-

stance which Buckingham might regret, it justified the confidence of her Majesty.

A week of great parade came to an end, and Henrietta Maria, gorgeously escorted, began her progress towards England. Louis XIII., falling unwell, got no farther than Compiègne. Anne of Austria, with her mother-in-law, Marie de Medici, accompanied the bride to Amiens, where the ballets, the masques, and the banquets were renewed. Buckingham, it is said, invented causes of delay, that he might still be haunting the skirts of Anne. As Amiens contained no palace capable of lodging three queens together, their Majesties were separately housed; Anne of Austria in a sumptuous building in the midst of a great garden on the banks of the Somme. Here the young Queen and her Court would often stroll, and here she found herself with Buckingham one evening, but not alone. Lord Holland had the Duchesse de Chevreuse on his arm, and all the ladies of the Queen's suite were in attendance. Buckingham conducted Anne; and it would appear that, emboldened by the nearness of their hour of separation, he grew more ardent in his suit. Night was falling, and at the turning of an alley he threw himself at the Queen's

feet and besought her passionately. She, "alarmed, and alive on a sudden to the danger she was in, gave a loud cry; and Putange, her equerry, who was walking a few paces behind, rushed up and seized Buckingham. In a moment the whole Court was on the scene, and Buckingham disappeared in the crowd."*

Two days later, Henrietta Maria was on her way to Boulogne; Marie de Medici, her mother, and Anne of Austria, her sister-in-law, going with her to the gates of Amiens. It was on the step of Anne's carriage that Buckingham said his farewell; "burying his face in the window-curtain to conceal his tears." The Princesse de Conti, who rode with the Queen, said to her (on Madame de Motteville's assurance), that, "although she could answer to the King for the virtue of her Majesty, she would say less for her on the score of kindness—and she thought the Queen's eyes held a kind of pity for the defeated lover."

But Anne had not seen quite the last of him. Contrary winds stayed Charles's bride at Boulogne, and Buckingham the proud, who had stormed Paris in a cuirass of diamonds, crept back to Amiens, with Lord

* Topin.

Holland for accomplice, pretending that a letter of importance for Marie de Medici had been forgotten. It was early morning when he presented himself at Anne's palace; and the Queen, who had just been bled for some ailment, was in bed, with several of her ladies about her. In royal houses, up to the era of the Revolution, the bedchamber was scarcely more private than the boudoir, and Buckingham and Holland were introduced. Buckingham "fell on his knees at the bedside, kissed the coverlet, and broke into a transport of passion, greatly to the scandal of the maids of honour. The Comtesse de Lannoi, entreating him to rise, said severely that these were not French ways." "I am not a Frenchman," replied the Duke and he continued to plead tenderly with the Queen. Her Majesty, greatly embarrassed, could find nothing to say, until she roused herself to reproach the Duke for his boldness. But this she did with no great show of indignation, and her heart was perhaps not quite untouched."* Buckingham returned to Boulogne, and never saw Anne of Austria again.

These are the two memorable scenes of Amiens with

* Topin.

which scandal was once very busy, but with which history, seeking proofs, was never seriously concerned. During the troubles of the Fronde, and the heat of civil war, the hint of a criminal love between Buckingham and the Queen, whose honour he would very willingly have spoiled, was bruited often; but all the evidence goes to show that Anne of Austria outwitted a passionate, unscrupulous gallant, and was never for an instant his victim. A kind of Spanish tenderness she may have felt for him, and we may suspect her of no small skill in flirtation; but, as there is no particle of evidence to adduce, accusation may go no farther. It is abundantly clear that, so far as Buckingham was concerned, the Queen was never without witnesses to her conduct. Marie de Medici, who bore her daughter-in-law no very good will at this period, took upon herself to assure Louis XIII. that he need not concern himself with rumour; that even if the Queen had been willing to demean herself she was so perpetually surrounded that the opportunity could never have offered. As for the impetuous indiscretions of Buckingham, the Queen had not encouraged and could not well have prevented them: in her younger days, said Madame de Medici to her son, such things

had happened to herself.* Madame might have added that the Duc de Montmorency and the Duc de Bellegarde had both been in love with the fascinating Queen of Louis XIII., and that neither of them had fared one whit better than Buckingham.

Says Topin:—"Nothing seems to accuse the Queen save the persistent coldness towards her of Louis XIII. But does this conduct date from the visit of Buckingham to Paris? Was Louis so completely estranged from the Queen as has been supposed? And may we seek in this the proof of an act of infidelity on the Queen's part, whether with Buckingham in 1625, as the result of love, or with some person unknown, in 1630, as the result of deliberate calculation, and to the end that, after the death of Louis XIII., which at that moment seemed imminent, she might reign in the name of her illegitimate child, who, on the King's unexpected recovery, must be hidden away, to become later the Man in the Iron Mask?"

* Mémoires of La Porte.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ACQUITTAL OF THE QUEEN.

BORN within eight days of one another, Anne of Austria, Infanta of Spain, and Louis, Dauphin of France, may be said to have been pledged in infancy. Astrologers had announced that, delivered under one star, they were destined to love each other, married or not married. The little Anne lent a willing ear to the wise men's predictions; and when, at the age of twelve, she was bidding good-bye to the Duc de Mayenne, who had come to Madrid to sign the marriage contract, she instructed him to tell the King that she was "extremely impatient to see him." Her governess was shocked, but the Infanta replied that it had always been recommended to her to speak the truth. Two years later, in 1615, she was a bride of fourteen, and as enthusiastic as ever about the boy she had married.

Much less enthusiastic was the boy. He had always declared that he hated the Spaniards, "because they

are the enemies of Papa"; and on two occasions, when his father, Henri IV., talked to him of his future marriage with the Infanta, he gave stubborn answers in the negative. He was grave and observant for his years, intolerant of the King's mistresses who tried to conciliate him, and precociously fierce against their children, whom he would not call his brothers and would not suffer at his table. After the death of Henry IV., the boy-King shewed himself less and less in sympathy with the gross speech and habits of the Court, and was fonder of hawking than of chambering.

The idea of marriage seems always to have repelled him, and after four years of wedded life, Anne was a wife only to the extent that the church had made her one. The conduct of the King had become, indeed, almost a question of State. His determined abstention had moved the French Court, it had offended the Court of Spain, it was regarded as a slight by the papal nuncio and the Court of Tuscany, whose aid had been considerable in bringing about the union.

In January, 1619, some kind of *rapprochement* seems to have been effected, but the hopes that were built on it were disappointed. Again in 1622 it was

said with confidence that an heir to the throne might be expected, but almost immediately afterwards the Queen was the victim of an accident. The visit of Buckingham left the King unmoved, and had no result in modifying his relations with the Queen. Having freed himself from his mother's yoke, Louis XIII. passed absolutely under that of Richelieu; and jealously as the cardinal-minister watched the young sovereign, he was yet more jealous in his surveillance of the Queen, an object of his implacable resentment. Is it possible for one moment to believe in an intrigue of hers, with Buckingham, with Mazarin, or with another, which Richelieu fails to know of, whose spies penetrated to the inmost recesses of the Court? And knowing it, would he have hesitated an instant to ruin the woman whom he hated, by confiding his knowledge to the King?

Let us consider next the circumstances of the illness of Louis XIII. in 1630. The King fell ill at Lyons, not, says Topin, at the beginning of August (which has been asserted), but on the 22nd of September; "and here the dates are of the utmost importance." On the 29th, an exhausting dysentery added itself to a severe attack of fever, and at midnight the doctors despaired

of saving him. He took a tender farewell of the Queen, and entreated her forgiveness for all things. Towards noon of the next day the King still lingered, and the Archbishop of Lyons was preparing to administer extreme unction, when the doctors, who had already bled the enfeebled body six times, ordered a seventh bleeding. This would assuredly have carried off the patient, but before the operation could be performed the true cause of the malady revealed itself: an abscess in the stomach broke, and the King was saved.

On his recovery, Louis XIII. quitted Lyons with the Queen, whose unaffected tenderness and solicitude at his sick-bed had touched him closely. "In that crisis, both had forgotten the past. The coldness of the one was overcome, the wounded pride of the other was healed." Exulting in her unwonted empire, it was not enough for the Queen to have won a tardy place in her husband's heart; she desired to complete her triumph by casting down the minister who had opposed himself between them, and, at one moment, she had nearly been successful—but the King could rule only by the Cardinal.

In January, 1631, the Queen was manifestly *enceinte*.

Supposing this the result of a criminal intrigue, at what date should the commencement of the pregnancy be placed?

"Is it, as was asserted, at the moment and by reason of the apparently imminent death of Louis XIII.? But the Queen was delivered within the first five days of April; consequently the child, conceived the 30th of September, would by no means have attained the full period, and could not, therefore, have become the Man in the Iron Mask.* Was it on the arrival of Louis XIII. at Lyons early in the August of 1630? But at this date, Anne of Austria had not the vital motive for becoming a mother, which, according to her accusers, she had on the 30th of September, when the King lay on the threshold of death. Either, then, the child is born incapable of living, or its conception mounts to an epoch which makes Louis XIII. the father, because the Queen had no need to procure herself an heir by unlawful means."

The truth is, that this, the third pregnancy of Anne of Austria, traces to the reconciliation which followed on

* The medical science of the present day might succeed in saving such a child; but the chances would be very slight indeed.

the desperate illness of the King. Richelieu himself is a witness here. "If France should be blessed with this fortune," he wrote, "it will be the fruit of God's blessing, and of the kindly relations established of late between his Majesty and the Queen."* Not a word on Richelieu's part which inculpates or seeks to inculpate the Queen, and it has been observed with justice, that history could never hope to be better instructed than that "clairvoyant and pitiless minister."

Not for seven years were the ardent hopes of the nation to be realised. On the 5th of September, 1638, Anne of Austria gave birth to a son who was to ascend the throne as Louis XIV. This is also the day which has been assigned to the birth of the Iron Mask by those who, rejecting the theory of an illegitimate child, have pronounced for that of a twin brother, born in the evening, "and condemned, for his tardy arrival, to perpetual imprisonment." The problem of the twin is briefly to be considered. In no country in Europe,

* *Lettres et papiers de Richelieu.* Found among the letters and documents which passed from the hands of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, Richelieu's niece, to the *Archives de l'État*, and which were published by the learned Avenet in his collection of *Documents inédits de l'histoire de France.*

perhaps, was the birth of a royal child more jealously scrutinised, more elaborately and minutely attested, than in the France of the Monarchy. Such an event might overwhelm the expectations of a collateral heir, or might ruin the prospects of a party. Precautions the most extraordinary were employed, precautions which may be said, practically, to have excluded the possibility of fraud or deception. Not only were the greatest persons in the State compelled to be eye-witnesses of the event, but the people itself was summoned "to assist" at the birth of the *Child of France.* The doors of the royal dwelling were flung open in this solemn hour, the people thronged in and passed freely into the innermost chambers of the palace. Madame Campan relates how, at the birth of the first child of Marie Antoinette, the room in which the Queen lay was so intolerably crowded that Louis XVI. broke a window to let in more air. Indeed, this practice, so distressing and humiliating to the royal mother, was invariable and all but immemorial.

It was not omitted at the birth of Louis XIV. At five o'clock on the morning of the 5th of September, 1638, Louis XIII. was summoned to the Queen's

chamber, where he remained until he had the happiness to know that a son and heir had been born to him. At six, there arrived in succession at Saint-Germain, the King's brother, Gaston d'Orléans (who had a vital interest in assuring himself that the birth was genuine), the Princesse de Condé, Madame de Vendôme, the Chancellor, Madame de Lansac (the future governess of the prince) and Mesdames de Senecey and de la Flotte of the royal household. Close to the Queen's couch an altar had been raised, where the Bishops of Lisieux, Meaux, and Beauvais pronounced mass in turn. Pressing up to the altar and flowing out into the room beyond, were princesses, dukes, duchesses, and bishops, "with a vast crowd of the common folk who had invaded the palace from an early hour, and who now completely filled it."

At eleven a.m. precisely the Queen's pangs were over, and the birth of a prince was announced. The resentment, ill-concealed, of Gaston d'Orléans did not escape a few observant eyes, but passed almost unnoticed amid the general joy. The melancholy Louis XIII. broke into smiles, and called on those around him to admire the fine proportions of his son. Shortly afterwards, and

in the Queen's chamber, the Child of France was baptised by the Bishop of Meaux, chaplain-in-chief. A King's messenger was despatched in all haste to bear the great news to Paris, but the joyous cries of the populace outran his horse all along the route, and as the messenger galloped into the capital, the bells were already swinging in every church.

Meanwhile, what of the Twin? The statement of Soulavie was, it will be remembered, that the Queen was delivered at eight in the evening of a second son, who, conformably to Richelieu's counsel, was privily and at once put away. The *rôle* here invented for Richelieu was of such immense importance that Soulavie should at least have been careful to know where the Cardinal was at this capital moment. For the truth is that Richelieu was not at Saint-Germain at all. He had quitted the Court at the end of July; he was at Saint-Quentin on the day of Louis XIV.'s birth, and he did not return to Paris until the 2nd of October. The letter of congratulation which he wrote to their Majesties from Saint-Quentin is printed in his *Lettres et papiers.* Richelieu, then, is summoned in vain as a principal instrument of the plot imagined by Soulavie. As the

Queen's enemy, he had every interest to denounce her to the King; as her suppositious friend and accomplice, he could scarcely have aided, at the distance of Saint-Quentin, the conspiracy which must have been compressed within an hour at the utmost in the palace of Saint-Germain.

But let Richelieu be dismissed from the case. We are to receive as plausible the suggestion that a twin brother of Louis XIV. is born without the knowledge of the Court. The birth is nine hours late, but the palace is still swarming with the princes of the family—and no one has heard of it. Or, it is known to all, and all are agreed, for no conceivable reason, to keep the secret. The secret is so well kept, moreover, that never once is it divulged or even hinted at in any *Memoir* of the period. We have contemporary notices of Anne of Austria which are scarcely discreet, and we have others which are less than discreet; but we have no record of her by any writer of her own day which contains the faintest reference to the surreptitious birth of a twin brother of Louis XIV.

Let this birth, however, be admitted. Let it be supposed that, at eight in the evening, the witnesses were

few, and had pledged themselves to secrecy. Was there any reason for secrecy? Why should Louis XIII. be, as Soulavie says, on the point of fainting when he learns that he has two heirs instead of one? The question of the trouble that might arise from the idea that the second born is the first conceived is not admissible; for, never sanctioned in medicine, this empirical theory had no recognition in the law of France. From commoner to King, the first-born was the heir. Far, therefore, from being alarmed by the birth of a twin, Louis XIII. had reason to praise his fortune, for the right of inheritance was now doubly consolidated in his own family.

Once more, however, for the rounding off of the argument, let the impossible be received and acquiesced in. This ambiguous son of Anne of Austria is born, we will say. He is brought into the world shortly before 1625, and Buckingham is his father; or in 1631, when Louis XIII. is believed to be dying, and Mazarin, or some gallant unknown, is his father; or in 1638, when he is presented to us as the most interesting, the most romantic, and the most unfortunate of twins. Entrusted to some creature of consummate devotion and

discretion, he is reared in the country; and if, in the course of time, there is developed a rather striking likeness to a certain Queen-mother or a King, no one perceives it, or those who do perceive it are polite enough to refrain from questions. But at what epoch was he imprisoned, and for what cause? "From the day that he becomes the famous prisoner whom Saint-Mars conducts in 1698 from Sainte-Marguerite to the Bastille, we have the right to ask when, how, and in what circumstances he was arrested and confided to his gaoler?"

He was allowed his liberty, we will suppose, during the lifetime of Anne of Austria; that would be not unreasonable, provided he were kept out of sight. Was he imprisoned after her death? But Anne of Austria died in January, 1666, and Saint-Mars receives no prisoner. Did the arrest take place, as Voltaire affirms, in 1661, after the death of Mazarin? But at this date, and three years later, Saint-Mars was still an officer of musketeers. It was not until December, 1664, that he was appointed to the governorship of Pignerol, where, in the following month, he received Fouquet into his keeping. On the 20th of August, 1669, arrives at Pignerol

a second prisoner, one Eustache Dauger. But Dauger is known to us: an obscure spy, he was given as a servant to Fouquet. Is it likely that Saint-Mars would have appointed to wait on Fouquet—who had passed all his life near Louis XIV. and Anne of Austria—a prince whose features recalled the King's? From the date of Dauger's imprisonment no other prisoner is sent to Saint-Mars until the Comte de Lauzun goes to Pignerol in 1671. After that, at long intervals, other prisoners are led thither, but they are all identified, their crimes or their faults are known.

"We see them sometimes not too well treated; and when, in 1681, Saint-Mars passes from the command of Pignerol to that of Exiles, he takes with him two prisoners only, whom he styles contemptuously "a pair of gaol-birds." At Exiles, at Pignerol, at Sainte-Marguerite (which dungeon was taken over by Saint-Mars in 1687), if new prisoners are entrusted to him, we know to what motives their incarceration may be attributed; and nothing in their past, nothing in their treatment in prison, nothing in their conduct allows us to suspect in any one of them a brother of Louis XIV. Needless to say, Saint-Mars would not be likely to designate his prince by

name in any official despatch, nor should proof of that kind be demanded. But when, after having examined in turn all the prisoners whom the future governor of the Bastille had in his charge—and among whom must of necessity be found that mysterious one with whom he traversed France in 1698—we have satisfied ourselves as to the causes of their arrest, and have penetrated into their past; when a hundred authentic despatches* render it absolutely certain that beyond these prisoners there was no other, have we not reason to conclude with the question: Where then is the son of Anne d'Autriche?"**

Tradition, fable, legend, ensnare us at every turn in this enquiry. Truth and fiction are interwoven in the strangest manner. Around every legendary hero the adventures of other persons gradually group themselves, and this has been signally the case with the Man in the Mask. How interesting—in its relation to the hypothesis of the king's brother—is the story of the bound-

* *Archives du ministère de la marine.—Archives du ministère de la guerre.—Archives du ministère des affaires étrangères.—Archives impériales.*

** Topin.

less deference shown to the prisoner, and the visit he received at Sainte-Marguerite from the minister Louvois, who addresses him "with a consideration savouring of respect." But we shall see presently that no one goes out of his way to show deference to the Mask; and, as for the visit of Louvois, that is pure invention. In 1680 (eight years, be it noted, before Saint-Mars took the Man in the Mask to the Isles) Louvois, who had broken his leg, went to Barèges for a few weeks to complete his cure. In Russet's *Histoire de Louvois,* we have the detailed itinerary of the journey, and Sainte-Marguerite is not found in it; nor, after this, was Louvois ever again in the south of France. The piquant episode of the silver plate (transformed by Père Papon into a linen shirt) is bound up with the theory of a brother or a twin brother of Louis XIV., and is highly interesting as an example of the commingling of fact with fiction in the popular history of the Mask. The story of the plate, as will be plain, has its origin in the attempt at escape of a Protestant minister confined at Sainte-Marguerite in 1692. Indeed, it was scarcely even an attempt at escape; the Protestant minister writes some complaint on his pewter-plate or vessel (is it necessary to say that

State prisoners of the 17th century were not served on silver?), and flings it out of window. Out of this commonplace fact has arisen the pungent tale of the silver dish which is nearly the death of the fisherman who rescues it. It was believed—and it has still a kind of illiterate currency.

There are legends which, doing hurt to no one's memory, it seems almost a pity to displace by fact; but it is always grateful to slay a fable which has involved a reputation in disgrace. This has been the interest and the motive of refuting once again the discarded and long-contemned invention of Voltaire, which, modified variously by successive writers, has crammed the mind of Christendom. It may lessen the charm of the story to remove from it the captivating person of a brother of Louis XIV., but the arid truth of history repeats that the Iron Mask was not a son of Anne of Austria. Who has proved the birth of the pretended prince? Who will give the date of his imprisonment? Not even in the France of the old Monarchy were royal infants delivered by the gods, and inscrutably concealed by them. The malign concept of Voltaire returns again to the rag-bag of Time—alms meet for oblivion.

CHAPTER V.

THE EXPIATION OF MONMOUTH.

ENGLISH readers will not expect to be detained long over the case of Monmouth. Monmouth's claims to the mask were the imagination of an ex-officer of French cavalry, by name Germain-François Poullain de Saint-Foix.* Single-handed he defended them, but with the valour of six. His hypothesis was only too easily destroyed, and perhaps its most valid title to respect during the lifetime of Saint-Foix lay in his perfect readiness to prove it at the point of the rapier.

The early career of Monmouth scarcely concerns us. The natural son of Charles II. and Lucy Walter or Walters (the "browne, beautiful, bold, but insipid creature" whom the diarist Evelyn encountered in Paris), his father doted on him, the Court spoiled him, and, in the prime of manhood he was, for the general people—

* Born February 5, 1698; died August 25, 1776.—Iung.

The young men's vision, and the old men's dream!

The line is Dryden's, and the famous flattery of the picture in "Absalom and Achitophel" may once again be cited:—

> Early in foreign fields he won renown,
> With kings and states allied to Israel's crown:
> In peace the thoughts of war he could remove,
> And seem'd as he were only born for love.
> Whate'er he did, was done with so much ease,
> In him alone 'twas natural to please:
> His motions all accompanied with grace;
> And Paradise was open'd in his face.

History has rejected the verdict of Monmouth's contemporaries. A man of brilliant looks and most eminent graces of person, a polished courtier, a sportsman, and (save at the crisis of Sedgemoor) a brave man in battle: these were certainly his best recommendations to the general good-will. He lacked almost every element of greatness. His conduct of the rebellion against James II. showed that he was neither a leader nor an organiser; defeated, he left his devoted followers to their fate; and, in the most critical hour of his existence—the interview with the implacable James—he displayed a cowardice and a baseness of spirit which disgusted the King,

amazed and shocked the French ambassador, and drew down upon his memory the scathing rebukes of Macaulay.

Day was not yet full come on the morning of the 6th of July, 1685, when Monmouth, with Grey and the German Buyse beside him, was riding in flight from the lost field of Sedgemoor. It is but just to say that, up to the moment at which he knew himself defeated, he had fought, on foot and pike in hand, like a stalwart soldier. But the moment of defeat was surely the one in which a rebel of courage and of heart would remember the men whom he had summoned to his flag. History has few more touching instances of devotion to a feeble cause than those which the wretched memory of Sedgemoor will eternally evoke. Those "Mendip miners" and poor peasants, with their scythes and bludgeons and a few old rusty guns, who shouted for "King Monmouth" while Monmouth was among them, and who tried to stem the whirlwind of James's cavalry when Monmouth had abandoned them, deserved to die for a better treason, and for a nobler traitor.

There is no need to rehearse again the details of the flight and capture of Monmouth. He must have

realised his doom in the hour of his arrest, and it remained to him only to meet it as the son of a king, and as the vanquished leader of an ineffectual revolt. But twice he failed, and despicably, in the fortitude that inspires the great insurgent. He had abandoned his heroic peasants when his military knowledge told him that the battle had gone to the King; and he abandoned his own manhood when he found himself in James's clutches. His letter to the King from Ringwood is branded by Macaulay as "that of a man whom a craven fear had made insensible to shame"—his behaviour in the interview with the King degrades him deeper still. It was an interview which James II. should never have accorded. He was justified in send ing to the scaffold an enemy who had not only usurped the title of king, but whose proclamation was charged with hideous libels; but, having resolved upon the death of Monmouth, James should not, in common humanity, have admitted him to his presence. That cruel favour, worthy of the most resentful sovereign in English history, tempted the beaten and broken Monmouth to plead miserably and most ignominiously for the life which was already lost to him.

With his arms bound, Monmouth grovelled on the floor at the King's feet; tried to embrace him by the knees; begged for life, for life only. The champion of Protestantism—a position which had disgraced him with his father, and the plea which had supported his rebellion against his uncle—he offered, in his last desperate extremity, to become a Catholic. James turned from him in contempt, and Monmouth's final hope was extinguished.

It is at this dramatic moment that M. Germain-François Poullain de Saint-Foix appropriates the doomed adventurer, hands him over to Louis XIV., who passes him on to Saint-Mars, who transforms him into the Man in the Mask.

James the unforgiving, it is pretended, forgave his nephew on the very eve of the fate he had ordained for him; and Louis of France consented to receive and lodge him for life in one of his convenient dungeons. This, of course, implies that it was not Monmouth, but some magnanimous substitute for that prince, whom Ketch, with the clumsiness of fright, mangled to death on Tower Hill, on the morning of the 15th of July, 1685. How then was the fraud accomplished? With

the ease which might be expected, when a relenting sovereign and uncle needs fortune's aid. An officer of Monmouth, condemned with him to the axe, and strikingly like the Duke, agreed to personate him on the scaffold! Prelates not acquainted with Monmouth were chosen to attend his last moments, and the execution was hurried, that there might be no opportunity for a "dying speech" to the crowd, and no opportunity for the crowd to recognise the generous impostor. The situation would no doubt be an extremely taking one in the theatre; but it was not the situation on the morning of Monmouth's death. The divines by whom he was accompanied to Tower Hill were the same who had exhorted him in the Tower; and the scene on the scaffold, far from being hurried, was so protracted that it must have been an agony to the spectators who had thronged in thousands to see their idol die. Nor was there any unseemly eagerness on the part of those in attendance upon Monmouth to send their victim in silence to the block: on the contrary, as will be seen, it was Monmouth himself who held back, when urged by them to address the soldiers.

It is when he comes to the proof that Saint-Foix,

as may be imagined, is so terribly hard put to it. He has not even stubble for his bricks. Beyond the tradition of the feigned execution of Monmouth (which was for many years a cherished belief of our own west-country peasants), he offers only the vaguest of rumours and the idlest of conjectures. He cites (with confession of little confidence) an anonymous libel published in Amsterdam and Paris, under the title *Amours de Charles II. et de Jacques II., rois d'Angleterre,* wherein Skelton, whom William of Orange had removed from the lieutenancy of the Tower, is reported as informing Lord Danby that "on the night after the pretended execution of the Duke of Monmouth, the King, accompanied by three men, came himself to remove him from the Tower. They covered his head with a kind of hood, and the King and the three mounted with him into a coach." Although this tract is put forward by Saint-Foix as one of his principal *pièces,* he spoils at a stroke whatever worth it may have had for him by the candid admission that it should be classed with "those books whose authors seek only to entertain their readers."

His next witness is one Nélaton, a surgeon, and a haunter of that hot-bed of gossip the Café Procope,

which has but lately disappeared from Paris. Nélaton's friends of the Café were familiar with a story which he did not tire of rehearsing: how that, being chief assistant to a surgeon near the Porte Saint-Antoine, he was sent one day to bleed a prisoner of the Bastille; the governor took him into the chamber of the prisoner, whose head was covered with a long towel knotted on the neck; the prisoner complained of great pains in the head; he wore a dressing-gown of black and yellow, ornamented with large fleurs d'or—and the surgeon's assistant perceived by the prisoner's accent that he was an Englishman. How and by whom the Englishman with his head veiled in a towel was identified with Monmouth, Saint-Foix omits to say.

From the Café Procope the simple advocate conducts his audience to the boudoir of that light-behaved celebrity, the Duchess of Portsmouth. "Father Tournemine has often repeated to me that, paying a visit to the Duchess of Portsmouth with Father Sanders, the ancient confessor of King James, the Duchess told them that she should always reproach the memory of that sovereign with the execution of the Duke of Monmouth, remembering that Charles II., in the hour of his death

and on the point of receiving the sacrament, had made him promise before the Host (which the priest Huldeston* had secretly conveyed), that, whatever rebellion Monmouth might attempt, he would never put him to death. —'Madame,' answered Father Sanders with vivacity, 'he did not put him to death.'"

And here, to conclude, is Saint-Foix's crowning proof: On the rumour in London, which gathered as it rolled, that an officer resembling Monmouth had been decapitated in his stead, a *"grande dame"*—not named to us—bribed certain persons—not named to us—to open the coffin; and, "having looked closely at the right arm, exclaimed—'This is not Monmouth!'"

Thus, for the confusion of later generations, were systems of the Mask erected towards the end of the eighteenth century. This is the case, and the whole case of Germain-François Poullain de Saint-Foix. And this is to stand against the vouchers of eye-witnesses of Monmouth's death, the written and extant testimony of the bishops who stood with him on the scaffold, the detailed despatches sent by the French Ambassador in

* Huddleston, the priest who had saved Charles's life after the battle of Worcester, and who received his last confession.

London to Louis XIV. in Paris, the Memoirs of the age, and the impartial conclusions of history, based on what is described by Macaulay as "the strongest evidence by which the fact of a death was ever verified."

But let Saint-Foix not be dismissed too coldly from us. We owe him, at least, a "homage of amaze." The callous invention of Voltaire, the light deceit of Soulavie, were certain of a hearing, and they have had it for an age; but we are dumbly to praise the forlorn pugnacity of this ex-officer of cavalry, ready and eager to pink the critic who would not be persuaded that a barber's assistant had identified Monmouth through the folds of a towel tied over his face. For the purposes of fiction, by the way, this was a stronger story than the legend of the twin brother: it attaches itself to the fancy—on the one hand, an English peasantry fondly believing in the second coming of an idolised prince; on the other hand, the victim of Sedgemoor following Saint-Mars from one French dungeon to another, and after missing a throne and escaping a scaffold, buried in the murk of a November twilight by two turnkeys of the Bastille.*

On the evening of Monday, 13th of July, Monmouth

* Topin.

knew that he was to die on Wednesday morning. Clarendon, Keeper of the Privy Seal, had visited him in the Tower, and had assured him that no hope remained. Two bishops came next, Turner of Ely and Ken of Bath and Wells, "with a solemn message from the King." Monmouth, bloodless and terror-stricken, could not be brought to resign himself. If no pardon, might not a respite be obtained? The prelates, more anxious at this crisis for his ghostly than for his physical welfare, exhorted him vainly; and were greatly scandalised by Monmouth's heretical plea of the propriety "in the sight of God," of his relations with his mistress, Lady Wentworth. They left him, after adjuring him to spend the night in prayer for spiritual enlightenment.

Tuesday came and passed, bringing neither pardon nor respite; and Monmouth's last day began. At an early hour he parted from his wife and children; showing, it is said, kindness but no emotion: he had sunk from terror to a dull despair. Lady Wentworth, who, in a few short months, was to follow her lover to the grave, did not see him.

The hour of ten brought the coach of the lieutenant of the Tower; and now, with Death's hand upon him,

Monmouth grew calm and dignified. At his request, the divines who had visited him in the Tower went with him to the scaffold, and continued to exhort him to the last: —"God accept your repentance! God accept your imperfect repentance!"*

Mournful faces thronged about the scaffold, and Tower Hill was "covered up to the chimney-tops with an innumerable multitude of gazers," weeping, or silently indignant. Monmouth, as he passed between the ranks of the guards, saluted them with a smile; and he mounted the scaffold without a tremor. The crowd hungered for his words, but he said very little, protesting that he died "a Protestant of the Church of England." The bishops broke in upon this, saying that as a member of that church he must submit himself to his King, and acknowledge the sinfulness of his rebellion. Once again the prelates interfered, when Monmouth would have spoken of Lady Wentworth. He declared his sorrow for the sufferings he had brought upon his followers; then the bishops "prayed with him long and fervently," and Monmouth, after a troubled pause, added a slow "Amen" to the closing prayer for the King. Entreated to speak to

* Macaulay.

the soldiers, "I will make no speeches," he exclaimed; and addressed himself forthwith to the executioner, to whom he gave six guineas, with injunctions to despatch him swiftly, and not to hack him "as you did my Lord Russell." But this command, and possibly also the long and painful scene he had been witness of, and the consciousness that the people loathed him for the dreadful work he had to do, unnerved the headsman utterly. Again and again the axe fell on Monmouth; the wretched Ketch flung it from him, took it up again at the sheriff's command, and finally severed the head from the shoulders with a knife,* amid screams of rage and horror from the crowd.

The vengeance of the relentless James, which history, nevertheless, cannot severely reproach, was satisfied. Monmouth's head and body were gathered up, and buried privately the same day under the communion-table of St. Peter's Chapel in the Tower of London. An abstract of his speech on the scaffold, published by his partisans, has been rejected as spurious.

* He "severed not his head from his body till he cut it off with a knife."—*Verney MSS.*

CHAPTER VI.

"THE KING OF THE MARKETS."

BETWEEN the years 1754 and 1789, three writers in succession espoused the cause of the Duc de Beaufort as a candidate for the mask. At the respected age of eighty (for he was born in 1674), the *abbé* Lenglet-Dufresnoy* first advanced this curious opinion, in his *Plan de l'histoire générale et particulière de la monarchie françoise*, a treatise in three volumes in-12, published in 1754.

The *système* Beaufort seems to have been the especial

* The *abbé*, an ingenious student, had had the philosopher's full share of imprisonment under the absolute monarchy, for he was twice confined in the Dungeon of Vincennes and six times in the Bastille. It was, in the eighteenth century especially, an approved method of recognising distinction in letters; and the *abbé* did not complain. Far from it; he always obeyed his summons with the greatest alacrity, declaring that prison was the best place in the world to work in; packed a few clean shirts and his MSS., and rode off with the officer who had come for him.

snare of age, for Lagrange-Chancel,* of the *Philippiques,* carried fourscore years and three, when, in 1759, in an article in Fréron's *Année littéraire,* he defended Lenglet-Dufresnoy.

The historian Anquetil was nearing the seventies when he lent his support to the same theory in his *Louis XIV., sa Cour et le Régent,* 1789.

Since the year of the Revolution, Beaufort's claim has gone undefended. It shall engage us very briefly.

Topin has noted the slight comparison that may be established between Beaufort and Monmouth. Both were royal princes, of illegitimate origin; both had a career of adventure; and both enjoyed the uncommon privilege of being fatuously loved by the people. During many years, the market-people of Paris refused as obstinately to believe in the death of Beaufort as did the peasants of the west of England in the death of Monmouth.** Ten

* The satirist's experience of dungeons was inferior to the *abbé's*, but he had been a prisoner of Sainte-Marguerite.

** These superstitions of the people are not peculiar to any age or country. The death of Mr. Charles Stuart Parnell is, I should suppose, pretty well attested; yet there are those in Ireland who declare that the lost leader lives and will reappear. Nay, by some it is maintained that he *has* reappeared—and in a character somewhat plaguing to our fighting-men. Has he not been identified in print

years after the siege of Candia, where Beaufort unquestionably lost his life, the women of the markets were still having masses said, not for the repose of his soul, but for the prompt return of the man himself.* These persistent doubts, which, passing lightly over the necessity of proof, are always so easily propagated, have sufficed to place Beaufort at one era and Monmouth at another under the mask of Saint-Mars's perplexing prisoner. The points of resemblance cease here: the characters of the two men were totally dissimilar.

Monmouth breathed the air of Courts as a prince should do. Beaufort, not less a prince, floundered like a clown in the royal circle—the Tony Lumpkin of Versailles. Grandson of Henri IV. and Gabrielle d'Estrées (his father was César de Vendôme), Beaufort came up from the country to the Court, a raw, handsome braggart, with one hand incessantly on his hip, and the other twirling up his moustaches; his conversation a ludicrous failure to mix the slang of the stable and the hunting-

with that elusive De Wet of the Boer War who (at the time of writing) is leading our Generals such a dance among the mountains and passes of South Africa!

* Topin!

field, which was his proper language, with the jargon of the elegants, which was exotic to him. He got so far as to introduce a vocabulary of his own, which had no imitators, and which Cardinal de Retz declared would have melted Cato into tears. But the stentorian, lubberly Duke had his revenge at the wars, where his idiosyncrasies were "not noticed in him"; and he returned from Arras with a reputation for prowess in the field which rallied around him the courtiers by whom he had before been flouted.

Indeed, he was presently in the way to become a strong man in the kingdom; for, on the eve of the death of Louis XIII., we find Anne of Austria desirous of making him the guardian of her son, as "the most honest man in France." It was not a sagacious choice, for "the most honest man" was in truth one of the vainest, most unstable, and most incompetent. In no long time he is observed talking very loudly in the rebellious ranks of the Fronde, leader of the ridiculous party whose pretensions obtained for them the nickname of *Les Importants.* A truculent, inglorious figure in the Fronde, he gave trouble enough to Mazarin to make it worth the minister's while to arrest him; he was confined for a time

in the State prison of Vincennes, and the Importants were dispersed.

But Beaufort, for all his ambition, had no singleness or fixity of purpose; he severed the ties of party as easily as he formed them, and the Fronde knew him no more. After a period of idle opposition to the young king, he was sent into banishment; and returned to be reconciled to his old enemy, Mazarin. At no time was Beaufort a political adversary to be very seriously reckoned with. He had no real knowledge of affairs; he could act violently at any time, but with judgment at no time; and, wanting the ability to choose a course for himself in politics, he was pushed into one course and another by those whom he fancied he was leading by the ear.

Outside the sphere of the populace of Paris—indeed, it was narrower; it was the sphere of the markets—Beaufort did not possess the slightest influence; and his authority over these people, whom he bullied and joked with in their own argot, was much more that of a popular hero than of a political leader. He called the market-people his subjects, and they in return dubbed him their king: he was the *King of the Markets*. The porters and fish-wives followed him in the streets, proud beyond mea-

sure of their *débonnaire* prince, who had condescended to choose his town house in the most populous quarter of Paris,* who would mount on a stone to hold an argument, or show off his strength in a public brawl.

On a sudden, however, the factious Beaufort ranged himself and grew submissive. In 1663, being then at the sane age of forty-seven, he received an appointment as Admiral, in succession to his father. Lagrange-Chancel would have his readers believe that Beaufort made use of this office to traverse the designs of Colbert, controlling the navy; but this proves quite inexact. The opposition to the throne was exhausted at this time; the passions kindled during the Fronde were extinguished; submission to authority had become or was becoming the policy of those princes and nobles erstwhile the most restless and intractable. "The Prince de Conti married the niece of Mazarin; the great Condé received from the King with gratitude the Order of the Saint-Esprit;" and Beaufort, transformed into an Admiral, grew mild and malleable. On the quarter-deck, it is true, he swore and swaggered as of old, and was quite the pirate in the treatment of his officers, whom

* Rue Quincampoix.

he was for ever threatening to pitch into the sea; but in his naval expeditions he endured cheerfully and with docility the authority of the expert whom Colbert had placed beside him.* It was his subordinates only who felt the natural violence of his character; the Court had nothing to fear from him. Far from choosing even to pretend himself dangerous, Beaufort had gone over, with characteristic ostentation, to the side of the young King and his advisers; and *had* he pretended danger, his gifts as a conspirator were too mediocre to excite alarm. At his proudest and most powerful, he was no more than the King of the Markets—*le Roi des Halles.*

The hypothesis which lifts Beaufort to the dignity of the Iron Mask rests on the assumption that his popularity threatened the safety of the State. He was given, in 1669, the command of the expedition to Candia, to the end, it was said, that he should return no more. He did not, it was said, die at Candia, as history has affirmed: from the midst of the fleet, and in the presence of the army, he was adroitly whisked away, and conveyed into the keeping of Saint-Mars, at Sainte-

* *Relation de Gigéry faite au Roi par M. de Gadagne, lieutenant-général.*

Marguerite. This is the story as we have it from Leglet-Dufresnoy, Lagrange-Chancel, and Anquetil—three savants who took the field at an age not usually nimble in critical speculation or research. If, however, the facts brought forward as to Beaufort's popularity (considered as a source of danger to the State) possess any value, Louis XIV., it is clear, had not a reason in the world for ridding himself of the Duke. But Beaufort did certainly disappear at the siege of Candia. Was he killed there, or was he carried thence into captivity? We have no proof whatever that he was carried away. Have we, then, the proofs of his death?

On the 5th of June, 1669, the expedition for the relief of Candia, besieged by the Turks, set out from Toulon, with Beaufort in command; and on the morning of the 19th the western point of the island was sighted. In the evening, under cover of darkness, Beaufort, with Navailles (general of the 7,000 French troops who had sailed with the fleet), made for the shore with muffled oars, and succeeded in reaching the port. They soon convinced themselves of the desperate condition of the Venetian defenders of the place. In fact, of the 14,000 whom the ambassador of the Venetian Republic had

reported to be within the walls, there were not above 6,000 who could be relied upon as combatants; and most of these had lost heart during a defence which was now regarded as hopeless.

A council of war was held on the 20th, when Beaufort, Navailles, the Captain-General of the Venetians, and the other officers who took part in it, were unanimously agreed that a resolute sortie offered the sole prospect of success. The final plan of this was settled on the evening of the 24th, and its execution resolved upon for midnight of the 25th. By that hour, the whole of the French troops had been safely brought on shore. The one hope lay in taking completely by surprise the swarming legions of the Turks. The troops of the Venetians, useless at present within their bastions, were not advised of the project of attack until one o'clock on the morning of the 26th, when, roused from sleep by their officers, they were hurried in silence to their posts.

The French foot were marshalled on the esplanade, where as the hour of two sounded from the church of Saint-Marc, they were joined by two hundred of the King's musketeers and five companies of cavalry. Na-

vailles and his men moved off towards the right, Beaufort directing his march upon the left: the two corps were to re-unite at a signal given by Navailles. Arrived within a little space of the enemy, Beaufort made his troops lie down; while Navailles, who had a larger distance to cover, continued his stealthy advance. Some fifty minutes before the dawn, the drums of the Turks startled the silence; but a few of Beaufort's marines, creeping up to the camp, returned to say that the enemy were merely beating the *réveille*, and were still in total ignorance of their danger.

Navailles had got unimpeded to the extreme right, where he halted until his reserve and the rear-guard had come up. Beaufort, with growing impatience, was waiting for the signal, when, suddenly, a roar of musketry burst from the distant right, and the red fire glowed over the camp of the Turks. In an instant, Beaufort was on his feet, his men with him; the charge was sounded; and, while the day had not yet dawned, the troops leaped blindly to the assault. The Turkish entrenchments were almost immediately stormed; the Turks, panic-stricken, fired off their pieces and fled, many casting themselves headlong into the sea. It

seemed as though victory were already with the French; but just then a vast sheet of flame reared itself into the night, and a terrifying explosion shook the field. Beaufort's troops and marines, not knowing what had happened, halted in alarm; and scarcely obeyed the rallying voice of their leader.

Far other were the effects which that catastrophe had produced among the soldiers of Dampierre, who headed the detachment commanded by Navailles. A magazine containing twenty-five thousand-weight of powder had exploded, swallowing an entire battalion of the French guards, and spreading panic on every side. The troops, persuaded that the whole field was sown with mines, threw away their arms, and ran in all directions. In the semi-darkness of that hour 'twixt night and morning, Beaufort's marines, meeting the flying troops of Dampierre and Navailles, fell on them as foes; and an indiscriminate and indescribable slaughter began. In vain did Beaufort, himself abandoned, essay to undo that fatal error. Covered with blood, his horse wounded, he threw himself amid the terrified Frenchmen, crying: *"À moi, mes enfants! Je suis votre amiral. Ralliez-vous près de moi!"* Brave, but futile effort!

The dawn was growing, and the Turks realised that they were not pursued. Recovering their ranks as quickly as they had broken them they became in their turn the assailants; and, shouting the Prophet's name, they chased the French to the gates of Candia.

Under shelter of the ramparts, the French took a breathing-space, and roughly summed their losses. Beaufort was missing. His death was considered certain by the army. He had been seen last, streaked with blood, and galloping on a wounded horse through that dense *mêlée* in which Frenchmen were killing Frenchmen as Turks. Any Frenchman who died obscurely on that half-lighted field might easily have been posed by his partisans as the hero of a mystery. But no one raises a hint of foul play in the case of Beaufort. The first despatch that reaches Colbert, from his brother Colbert de Maulevrier, signalises Beaufort's death as the most deplorable result of the battle.* And the army was not satisfied with the knowledge that the leader of the expedition was missing. Was it possible the Turks had taken him? A white flag was sent into

* *Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque impériale, papiers Colbert*: cited by Topin.

the Turkish lines, but Beaufort was not among the prisoners. It was then held for certain that he had fallen, an easy mark on horseback, among the lost files of the French whose death was never questioned; and not a hint or a line that has come down to posterity has disturbed this belief.

The dates alone should suffice to disprove the case of Lenglet-Dufresnoy and his two adherents. Was the Man in the Mask a nonagenarian? Beaufort was born in 1616, and the prisoner of Saint-Mars died in the Bastille in 1703. And how does Saint-Mars receive Beaufort a prisoner at Sainte-Marguerite in 1669—*eighteen years before he goes to that fortress?*

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRAGEDY OF NICOLAS FOUQUET.

ENDLESS indeed has been the perverse ingenuity of writers on the subject of the Iron Mask. That Nicolas Fouquet, Louis XIV.'s overweening Superintendent of Finance, died at Pignerol, March 23, 1680, is an historical fact which does not admit of question or of doubt; yet Paul Lacroix (the bibliophile Jacob, a voluminous and entertaining author), not content with the nineteen years of captivity which fate decreed the afflicted *Surintendant,* sentenced him to twenty-three more as the Man in the Iron Mask.

Not that this folly was quite original with the bibliophile. It glimmered first in an article published, in 1789, in a journal called *Loisirs d'un patriote français;* republished afterwards as a pamphlet, and sold to a confiding public under the title, *L'Homme au masque de fer, dévoilé d'après une note trouvée dans les papiers de la Bastille.* The remarkable "note found among the

papers of the Bastille" has long gone to keep company with the legend of the silver plate and the linen shirt; for neither Paul Lacroix nor anyone else succeeded in proving its existence, and the bibliophile prudently abstains from giving it a place of honour among his documents. Here it is, for the entertainment of the curious: —*Fouquet, arriving from the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite in an iron mask.* The note carried the good round number, 64,389,000, and a double signature—the letters X X X superposed on the name Kersadiou. The author of the jest elected to remain in an obscurity which is and always has been destitute of interest. The erudition and inexhaustible versatility of Lacroix, from whose pen we have a little library of volumes on the curiosities of French history, were idly and unworthily employed in reviving, in 1840,* a fable which had died in the hour of its birth, sixty years earlier.

The downfall, degradation, punishment, and death of Fouquet make an episode as striking and poignant as any in the reign of Louis XIV. He was at his height of power, the most dazzling figure at the Court, just when the King, at the age of twenty-three, had resolved

* *L'Homme au masque de fer.* (Paris, Mayen, 1840, in 8vo).

to rule France alone. At the first Council he held after the death of Mazarin, Louis had said: "I shall be my own Prime Minister in future";* and the Court, incredulous at first, soon realised that the King meant to keep his word. Already devoted to pleasure and the chase, he began now to show himself energetic and vigorous in affairs; and from this time forward, during the ensuing fifty years, he devoted five hours a day to the business of the State. So long as Fouquet was indispensable, Louis retained him in his post; and that over-confident, rash minister promised himself the Chancellorship and the real government of France. But, though he would not see it, and was deaf to the warnings that reached him, Fouquet was very soon upon the brink of ruin. The fortune he had amassed out of the taxes was probably at this time the most considerable in France. Colbert, however (Fouquet's arch enemy), conveyed to the King the secret of a hoard of nearly eighteen millions of ready money, left by Mazarin. Search was made and the money found; and Louis, independent of Fouquet from that moment, resolved forthwith upon his overthrow. Along with the King's incense-

* "*Je serai à l'avenir mon premier ministre.*"

ment went a certain fear of the dazzling and fascinating minister, who was capable, as Louis imagined, of impeding if not of thwarting his schemes for the government of France after his own manner. During a summer of splendid *fêtes* at Fontaineblau, to which the opulence of Fouquet contributed, the plot against him was elaborated by Louis, whose natural gift of dissimulation had ripened under Mazarin's tuition. Had Fouquet been merely Superintendent of Finance, he could have been attacked and destroyed at once; but as *Procureur-Général* he enjoyed the protection of the *Parlement.* The King and Colbert had recourse to a stratagem to induce him to resign his office of *Procureur-Général;* he did so, or rather he sold the office; and Louis exclaimed exultingly: *"Tout va bien; il s'enterre de lui-même!"* Stripped of the shield of the *Parlement*, Fouquet was at the King's mercy, and on the 5th of September, 1661, the blow fell. He was arrested in the Place de la Cathédrale at Nantes, whither Louis had gone to meet the Estates of Brittany.

"The formation of a special court to try him, the length of his trial, which lasted three years, the obvious falseness of most of the charges, the influence exercised

by Louis over the judges, the courage and ability shown by the prisoner, his intimate relations with all the ablest men of the day, his numerous and varied interests, all combined to focus the interest and the sympathy of France upon Nicolas Fouquet."*

Sympathy rose higher when it became evident that Louis had determined to obtain a conviction at any cost. It was "a seventeenth-century Warren Hastings trial." Fouquet was accused of "corruption and dishonesty in the management of the finances, of appropriating to himself public money, of preparing to revive civil war in France, and for that purpose of fortifying Belle-isle." The accusation of treason was ridiculous, but the charges of malversation were easily established. The truth is that, with rare intervals of sound administration, the financial system was rotten and immoral throughout the whole period of the monarchy, and later. Mazarin might have been impeached on this count as justly as Fouquet, who was not more unscrupulous than the majority of his contemporaries in the handling of public money. But Fouquet fell, as Louis intended he should fall. Nor was it enough for Louis to have broken and dishonoured

* Hassall's "Louis XIV."

him: the King's treatment of the sentence decreed by the judges was an anticipation of the chastisement with which, eighteen years later, he was to visit the Iron Mask. The judges were in favour of banishment; but the young sovereign, just entering upon the splendid heritage of France, holding in his hands a power tremendous enough to inspire generosity, and at an age when the heyday in the blood should cry pity upon all misfortune, deliberately changed the sentence into one of perpetual imprisonment. Fouquet the magnificent, whose lordly motto had been, *Quò non Ascendam! Whither may I not mount!* sank into the shades of a dungeon. Once lodged in Pignerol, he never quitted it.

The system of Lacroix rests almost entirely on the assumption—a perfectly gratuitous one—that Fouquet's death at Pignerol was simulated. Thus, after leaving his victim in prison for nearly twenty years, and after having, towards the close of that period, eased his bonds considerably, Louis, for some cryptic reason which history has not penetrated to this day, suddenly gives him out as dead, separates him from the rest of the world, binds a mask over his features, and holds him in this double captivity twenty-three years longer. The death of Fouquet

in 1680, says Lacroix, "is far from being certain." Let us see.

And first it is to be observed that the captivity of Fouquet was for many years an extremely rigorous one. He endured it with great fortitude, spending much time in the study of works of devotion, and committing his thoughts to paper when he could get leave to write. Between the years 1665 and 1672, says Topin, all communication with the outer world was forbidden him; he might not even send a message to his family. All at once the King begins to soften a little. At first, in 1672, a rare letter is permitted; then a more regular correspondence, and freedom of intercourse with other captives and inmates of the fortress; finally, there is the visit and prolonged stay at Pignerol of certain members of Fouquet's family. The despatches are open.

On the 20th of January, 1679, the minister Louvois wrote to Saint-Mars:—

"His Majesty is quite willing [*trouve bon*] that M. Fouquet and M. de Lauzun* should see each other

* De Lauzun, a captain in the King's guards, the hero of many extraordinary adventures, and one of the most impudent little coxcombs in France, was ten years in prison at Pignerol. He had already had a taste of the Bastille, for an insolent speech to Louis XIV.

as often as they please. They may, if they choose, pass the day together, and take their meals together. You are at liberty to join them. They may have leave to exercise at all times, not only within the limits of the dungeon, but in any part of the citadel. You can take them to dine with Madame de Saint-Mars as often as you like, even when strangers or officers of the town are present . . . His Majesty accords permission to the officers of the citadel to visit your prisoners and pass the morning or afternoon with them, should they wish it, one of your own officers being present. . . . With regard to the governor and residents of the town, you will act as you think proper in respect of visits to be paid by them."

Still more important and explicit is the minister's letter of the 10th of May:—

"The King, having granted permission to Madame Fouquet, her children, and M. Fouquet of Mézières,* to visit M. Fouquet at Pignerol, I have his Majesty's command to advise you of the same, and further to inform you that Madame Fouquet is to have the fullest liberty of intercourse with her husband, and even,

* Fouquet's brother.

should she desire it, to take up her residence in M. Fouquet's apartment. As regards the children and M. Fouquet's brother, his Majesty desires that they may be with him as much as they please, without the presence of any of your officers. The same liberty is to be accorded to Salvert, Madame Fouquet's man of business. You may give leave also to the senior officers of the town garrison and of the citadel to visit your prisoners."

In the month of June, Louvois authorises the visit of certain "*dames de qualité*" of Turin. In November he permits another brother of Fouquet to take up his residence at Pignerol for twenty-four months, and to see the prisoner "as often as he pleases during that period."

Lastly, on the 18th December, Fouquet's daughter has leave to lodge in the dungeon itself, in a chamber divided only by the distance of a single step from her father's.

And it is in these circumstances, in the immediate presence of a numerous family—under the very eyes, we may say, of a wife, a son, a daughter, and two

brothers—with Madame's man of affairs at hand, with officers and people of the town and garrison coming and going as they list, that Paul Lacroix has the temerity to speak of a simulated death of Fouquet, the 23rd of March, 1680! The time was not exactly in joint for a plot of that sort. Is it a schemer so astute as Louis XIV. (at this date forty-two years of age) who sends Fouquet's whole family to join him at Pignerol, gives his wife leave to share his chamber, lodges his daughter within a brick of him, and throws the prisoner's doors open to any visitors he may choose to receive, at the precise hour when his Majesty is planning to report him dead, and to thrust him thereupon into greater secrecy than ever? It is childish. And for what reason, this pretended death and this prolongation of Fouquet's captivity by three-and-twenty years? The bibliophile whispers us of some secret of State of which Fouquet is the dreaded possessor. So! And this prisoner with the unspeakable secret is suddenly given the liberty of the citadel, he is set in the midst of his family, he is suffered, nay almost invited, to blab it in the ears of all the gossips of Pignerol who may come and call on him and stay to dinner just as often as he has a mind to company?

M. Lacroix, this was rating rather cheaply the intellects of Louis XIV.!

But the case against the bibliophile is not quite finished. Other documents of State, together with letters of the family, allow us to follow Fouquet for a space after his death from apoplexy on the 23rd of March, 1680. Saint-Mars sent immediately to Louvois. The family of Fouquet communicated the tidings to their friends, and wrote to the minister soliciting the King's permission to lay him in their vault in Paris. Madame de Sévigné writes to her daughter on the 3rd of April: "Poor M. Fouquet is dead; I am very sorry." And on the 5th, "If I were in the counsels of M. Fouquet's family, I would see that they did not send his poor body on a journey, as I hear they propose to do." On the 6th of April, the *Gazette de France* makes the following announcement: "We learn from Pignerol that the sieur Fouquet has died there from apoplexy."

On the 8th of the month Louvois replied to Saint-Mars, to the effect that he had informed the King of Fouquet's death, and that the King wished Fouquet's chamber to be prepared for Lauzun. His Majesty sends

no message of regret. On the same day the Minister wrote to Fouquet's son, the Comte de Vaux:—

"MONSIEUR,—

"I am in receipt of your letter of the 29th of last month. I have spoken to the King concerning the request of your mother to remove the body of the late M. Fouquet from Pignerol. Rest assured there will be no difficulty about that; his Majesty has given the necessary orders."

At the same time Saint-Mars received his instructions:—

"The King commands me to inform you that his Majesty consents to your delivery of the body of the late M. Fouquet to his widow, to be transported whither it may please her."

The family possessed a vault in the chapel of Saint-François de Sales, in the church of the convent of the Dames de Sainte-Marie, grande rue Saint-Antoine, Paris; but it was not until the 23rd of March of the year following, 1681, that the body of Fouquet was carried

and deposited there. In the "*registres mortuaires*" of the church the record may be read:—

"*Le 23 Mars 1681, fut inhumé dans notre église, en la chapelle de Saint-François de Sales, messire Nicolas Foucquet, qui fut élevé à tous les degrés d'honneur de la magistrature, conseiller au parlement, maître des requestres, procureur général, surintendant des finances, et ministre d'Estat.*"

Thus humbly, by leave of the King, whose anger had undone and destroyed him, was Fouquet the magnificent inurned in the church of the Ladies of Saint Mary, alongside the dust of his father.

The principal hypotheses—most of them, as the reader has perceived, mere "springes to catch woodcocks"—have now been submitted to analysis. François Ravaisson, keeper of the Arsenal Library, whose task of classifying the Archives of the Bastille has since his death been continued by M. Funck-Brentano, "believed for a moment" (says his successor) "that the celebrated prisoner might have been the young Count de Kéroualze who had fought at Candia under the orders of Admiral de Beaufort. Ravaisson put forth his theory with much

hesitation, and as, in the sequel, he was himself led to abandon it, we need not dwell any longer upon it."

M. Jules Loiseleur, in his charming series of *Problèmes historiques* (1867) argued with force and brilliancy in behalf of a certain "*prisonnier mystérieux*" arrested by Catinat in 1681. Marius Topin put Loiseleur out of court and countenance "by discovering Catinat in the very prisoner he was said to have arrested!"

General Iung wrote a big and very interesting book* in support of the claims of one Louis de Oldendorf (known also as Lefroid, de Kiffenbach, and the Chevalier des Armoises), a native of Lorraine, a spy and poisoner, arrested March 29, 1673, in connection with the celebrated "*affaire des poisons.*" Iung's work casts a broad light upon those "amazing poison-dramas" which remained for years among the obscurest problems of the reign of Louis XIV.; but in the endeavour to identify Oldendorf with the Man in the Mask he failed completely. As his opponent, M. Lair, at once observed (and the point is emphasised by M. Funck-Brentano),

* *La Vérité sur le Masque de Fer.* (*Les Empoisonneurs*). Paris: H. Plon, 1873.

"General Iung did not even succeed in proving that his nominee entered Pignerol, an essential condition to his being the Masque de Fer."

These records, then, may once again be wiped from memory: Oblivion has looked upon them all. We have still to pluck the heart out of the mystery.

PART II.

THE MAN IN THE MASK.

CHAPTER I.

THE INTRIGUE FOR CASALE.

HAD Louis XIV. maintained in Italy the sagacious policy of Richelieu, there had never been a Man in the Iron Mask!

Victorious in 1631, that great minister in his prudence sacrificed most of the fruits of his victory; restored Piedmont and Savoy, retaining only the stronghold of Pignerol, whereby he held always open a gate of northern Italy. To keep watch on Italy without alarming her; to protect the rights of the small Italian princes, while not menacing their independence; to require of them in return the fullest measure of confidence; to thwart the Spanish plots, and suffer the Spaniards to draw upon themselves all manner of Italian hatreds: in a word, to preserve an attitude passive but vigilant, firm but not threatening—such was Richelieu's judicious policy towards Italy.

And to this policy Louis XIV. adhered, until, at about middle age, great in the reflected triumphs of his diplomats on the one hand, and of his invincible troops on the other, he looked upon himself, not without reason, as Europe's arbiter. Before the Treaty of Nimeguen had been signed in 1678, his ambitious fancy had o'erleaped the Alps; and in Louvois, his Minister of War, he found a willing and impetuous supporter. In Piedmont he possessed Pignerol, which, sufficient in the eyes of Richelieu, no longer contented Louis, who had imagined for himself a great *rôle* in Italy. He would have done well to remember at this juncture that his authority beyond the Alps had been accepted in proportion as its aims had been disguised, and that there must come a change in the sentiments of the Italians when it was perceived that the moderate policy of Mazarin and Richelieu was to be superseded by the "military diplomacy" of Louvois.

Among the kinglets sharing the pleasant territories of northern Italy at this era was the young Charles IV., Duke of Mantua, "the degenerate representative of that House of Gonzaga from which had sprung so many illustrious men, and which had allied itself with some of

the foremost families of Europe." History depicts Charles as a rare gambler, rake, and spendthrift; an absentee who seldom visited his little territory except to wring money from it; a leader in the gaieties of Venice, where he was fast exhausting in extravagant adventures the remnants of health and fortune. His revenues were spent before they reached him, and he was always in the hands of the Jews. In fine, the young Duke was on the point of being up for sale—and Louis XIV. was not unwilling to become his purchaser.

Separated from Mantua by the fair extent of the great plain of Lombardy was the Marquisate of Montferrat, a fertile and coveted tract which had been annexed to the Duchy of Charles IV. Of this region the capital was Casale, a fortified place, swept by the Po, and lying some fifteen leagues to the east of Turin. The district is rugged, and at this day almost untravelled, but Charlemagne had planted here an outpost of his empire. The walls of Casale "are still formidable, though the children race up and down their approaches unterrified; and the castle and the citadel still re-echo to the clash of arms, as they have done for more than a thousand years. . . . . Palaces, too, may be found, if

one care to look for them, and—best of all—broad, shady walks by the ancient bastions."* This Casale was a place of great strategical importance, above all for Piedmont: Turin had always eagerly desired it. That the Duke of Mantua, given over to his pleasures, should possess a footing in this neighbour-territory of Piedmont, mattered little to anybody: but that the King of France should establish himself there—this would be a serious concern for Turin. He was already master of Pignerol, and if the reader will glance at a map of northern Italy he will see at once that, master of Casale also, Louis would hold the Government of Turin between two redoubtable fortresses. From Pignerol in the south-west, the passage of the Alps lay open to him; at Casale in the north-east, he would stand upon the highroad to Milan. And Casale was the object of the intrigue "mysteriously begun in 1676."

The minister of Louis at the capital of the Venetian Republic was the Abbé d'Estrades; an able, restless, scheming man; eager to commend himself to his master by some successful stroke of diplomacy.** No sooner

* Justin H. Smith, "The Troubadours at Home," vol. I.

** "The Abbé d'Estrades, Ambassador for a considerable time

was d'Estrades aware that Louvois had put Casale into the mind of Louis, than he began forthwith to make the project his own. Casale must be ceded to Louis, and d'Estrades was the man to contrive it. He knew how Charles of Mantua stood, how overpowering was his need of money, and how beggared his resources; he knew the character of Charles. The situation seemed as fortunate as fortunate could be.

Further, it was well known to the *Abbé* that Charles was greatly in the hands of his favourites; that the affairs of Mantua were more or less administered by them; that Charles—so long as he were left to his gamesters, his women, and his wine-parties—was very prone to take their counsel in all things. Through one of these persons the young Duke might be approached.

High among the favourites of Charles was Ercole Antonio Mattioli. Born at Bologna, the 1st of December, 1640, Mattioli, a foremost figure in Mantuan

from Lewis the Fourteenth to the Republic of Venice, was son of Godfrey, Count d'Estrades, so long employed in negotiations and embassies in Holland, and who was one of the eight Marshals of France made upon the death of Turenne. Madame Cornuel called them 'La Monnoie de M. de Turenne.'"—Ellis.

society, belonged to an ancient and distinguished family of lawyers. His grandfather, Costantino Mattioli, had risen to the rank of senator; and one of his uncles, Hercule or Ercole Mattioli, a Jesuit father, was a noted orator. At the age of nineteen Ercole Antonio himself was a prizeman in civil and canonical law, and a little later he held a chair in the University of Bologna. Topin describes him as having won some repute in authorship. Having allied himself by marriage with a senatorial family of his native town, Mattioli settled in Mantua, where his talents and his graces won him the patronage and support of Charles III., by whom he was ultimately appointed Secretary of State. The son and successor of Charles III. favoured him not less, and in this reign Mattioli was created Supernumerary Senator of Mantua, a dignity which carried with it the title of Count. "When he ceased to be Secretary of State," says Ellis, "does not appear; but he was clearly not in that office when he first, unhappily for himself, was involved in diplomatic relations with the agents of the French Government." What is certain is that, although not at this date Secretary of State, Mattioli was wholly in the Duke's good graces, his companion in affairs of

pleasure, and a counsellor in politics when Charles was minded to be serious.

Him the Abbé d'Estrades resolved to sound upon the affair of Casale. But before putting himself in direct communication with Mattioli, d'Estrades despatched to him one Giuliani, a roving Italian newsman, who tripped from town to town seeking things to publish in a sheet of which he was the editor. "A little editor of newspapers, in whose shop the letters of news are written," is the description given of him in a despatch from Venice to the minister Pomponne. Faring hither and thither on his proper business—Turin, Milan, Verona, Mantua, Venice—Giuliani was the man who could be used as a go-between, and no suspicion raised as to his movements. D'Estrades sent him to parley with Mattioli at Verona; and this was the first real move in the game.

CHAPTER II.

THE RIPENING PLOT.

IT is begun in the strictest secrecy. On the French side they were well aware that the occupation of Casale by troops of Louis XIV. could certainly make little for the permanent welfare of Italy, while the advisers of Charles IV. were quite alive to the necessity of keeping the affair from the eyes and ears of the Spanish party intriguing in the Court of Mantua. They were opponents to be reckoned with. Charles's mother, Isabella Clara of Austria, who headed his council, and who was the real ruler in Mantua, was entirely pledged to the Spanish interests, as opposed to those of France.

The situation is lucidly set out in the first long despatch of d'Estrades to Louis XIV., dated from Venice, December 18th, 1677.* D'Estrades had satisfied himself

* We issue here upon that remarkable series of papers which Delort was the first to overhaul in the Foreign Office at Paris, and in which he found the beginnings of the true history of the Iron Mask.

that Charles possessed "more talent and ambition than he was thought to have;" that he would gladly get back the authority which had slipped into his mother's hands; and that he had a rooted distrust of the Spaniards, who, as he believed, aimed at securing for themselves Casale and the whole Montferrat. These were the facts which gave d'Estrades to believe that the Duke would be not unwilling to place himself to some extent under the protection of the French King. The despatch goes on to show why Mattioli had been selected as the agent to approach the Duke, and Giuliani as the agent to approach Mattioli.

"I have thought," writes d'Estrades to Louis, "that I could not employ anyone in this affair more proper to conduct it than a certain Count Mattioli, who is entirely devoted to that prince. I had known him for some time, and he had shown a great desire to render himself agreeable to your Majesty by some service. I knew that he had been Secretary of State to the late Duke of Mantua; that the reigning duke had preserved much affection for him, and that he was well informed as to the different interests of the Princes of Italy. As, however, he had been much in the Milanese, and had had

access to the Spanish ministers, I resolved not to place any confidence in him till I had put him to the proof. I accordingly charged the Giuliani to whom your Majesty was good enough to send a reward six months ago, and whose zeal for your service forbids all doubt of his fidelity, to observe Mattioli attentively, and in secret. Having been sufficiently informed of his extreme discontent with the Spaniards, who, after entertaining him with hopes, had always in the end abandoned him, I sent Giuliani, in the month of last October, to Verona, where he went under pretext of his private affairs."

We may return to that month, and overhear the first overtures of Giuliani in an affair which was to bring about results terrible enough for Mattioli. Giuliani had been well primed by the *abbé*, and shows for his own part an emphatic interest in his mission. As d'Estrades had instructed him, he represented to Mattioli that the friends of the Duke desired greatly to see him in a position of independence; that all his territories and all his revenues were under the absolute control of his mother and the monk Bulgarini, her confessor, and that Casale and the Montferrat were threatened by all manner of Spanish and other intrigues.

To these hints Mattioli lent an open and a friendly ear. "He had long, with grief, seen the truth" of what Giuliani had laid before him, he said, but "there was still a remedy for so great an evil," and he would, with Monsieur l'Abbé's approval, get speech of the Duke and "discover his real sentiments." All this was duly conveyed by Giuliani to d'Estrades, and by d'Estrades to Louis XIV.

Next we are apprised of the "secret interview" which Mattioli had with Mantua, and then of the meeting between that prince and Giuliani. The Duke, says d'Estrades, "approved very much of the proposition that was made him, to free him from the perpetual uneasiness he felt on the score of the Spaniards, and that, for this purpose, Casale should be placed in your Majesty's hands, upon the understanding that I should try to obtain from you in his favour all that he could reasonably ask for."

The Duke desired to communicate the matter to two of his counsellers, "in whom he had the most confidence," and he gave the selection of them to Mattioli. Mattioli named the Marquis Cavriani and Joseph Varano, "in whom he has confidence." The affair, it is evident, was

already in a good train; already there was talk of the preparation of "a draft of the plan." D'Estrades was now anxious for a personal interview with the Duke, and this, it was agreed, should be managed at Venice in Carnival time, when all the world, "even the Doge and the oldest senators," went masked. What the Duke desired above everything was that Louis should send into Italy a sufficiently strong army "to be able to undertake something considerable,"—an army of which he wanted the generalship, says d'Estrades, "in order to be considered in Italy like the late Duke of Modena, and the late Duke of Mantua, who at his age commanded in chief the Emperor's army, with the title of Vicar-General of the Empire."

Enclosed with d'Estrades's despatch was a letter from Mattioli to Louis,* in which he protests his devotion to him and to the interests of France. "For myself, I bless the destiny which procures me the honour of serving so great a monarch, whom I regard and revere as a demi-god." He undertakes to "transmit to your Majesty all that I shall learn respecting Casale, which has been fortified by one of the most skilful engineers of the

* December 14th, 1677.

Milanese." He entices the King with a hint of the great strength of the place. "I am convinced it would be useless in me to enlarge upon the importance of the fortress of Casale. Your Majesty must remember that at different times it has arrested the progress of many armies, and that it is the only bulwark upon which depends the loss or the preservation to the Spaniards of the territories of Milan; territories which, for more reasons than one, ought to belong to your Majesty's crown."

To this Louis replies with his own hand, on the 12th of January, 1678:—

"I have seen from the letter you wrote me, as well as from what has been communicated to me by my Ambassador, the Abbé d'Estrades, the affection you exhibit for my interests. You cannot doubt that I am greatly obliged to you, and that I shall have much pleasure in giving you proofs of my satisfaction upon every occasion."

On the 24th of December, 1677, and on the 1st of January, 1678, we have despatches of d'Estrades to the

minister Pomponne.* The Abbé has learned from the Duke of Mantua that, should the French enter Italy, and should the Duke show a disposition to favour them, the Austrian party have determined to seize Casale and all the Montferrat. Mantua also is to be occupied. In these circumstances, the Duke, who is "watched by his mother, by the monk Bulgarini, who governs her, and by the greater part of his ministers," can neither declare himself openly on Louis's side, nor deliver up Casale to him, "unless he will send a sufficient army into Italy to secure that fortress." Further, "the Emperor and the Spaniards are ardently soliciting the Nuncios and the Ambassadors from Venice, residing at Madrid and Vienna, to persuade their masters to unite with them against France, and to represent to them that they have a common interest in the preservation of Italy, and in keeping out of it the armies with which it is menaced."

* "Simon Arnaud de Pomponne, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1671 to 1679, when he was dismissed from his office, but retained the title of Minister of State, with permission to attend the Council. A man, like so many of his race, who united considerable talents to great excellence of character. Madame de Sévigné says, in speaking of the eminent station he had filled, that 'Fortune had wished to make use of his virtues for the happiness of others.'"—Ellis.

On the 12th of January, Louis writes exhaustively to d'Estrades, commending his zeal in the business, and flattering Charles for the "noble resolutions he seems disposed to take." As for the citadel and fortress of Casale, should they be given up to him, Louis says, "I shall willingly content myself with holding them in the same manner in which I held them formerly; that is to say, under the condition of preserving them for the Duke of Mantua, and of paying the garrisons I shall keep there. I would also, in order to favour the military inclinations of this Prince, take measures with him respecting the command of the armies I shall send across the Alps."

Louis objects, however, to the Duke's price of one hundred thousand pistoles.* "You must make him understand that this sum is too large." As it was not convenient to Louis to send a considerable army into Italy that year, d'Estrades is instructed to protract the negotiations, and to "continue to entertain" the Duke with the notion that the French troops would shortly arrive in his territories. Mattioli, as the principal confidant in the affair, is to be kept "always in good

* About £40,000; the pistole being equal to ten francs.

humour, by the assurance of the especial good-will I bear him for his conduct, and by the expectation of the proofs of it which I shall be inclined to give him."

The main difficulty—indeed, almost the only one—was to protract the negotiations, for everything was going so smoothly and so rapidly that, as d'Estrades writes to Pomponne on the 29th of January, there was no serious hindrance to be found or created. It was in the month of January that Mattioli began secretly to visit the Abbé at his house in Venice. The only point the Duke's agent seemed inclined to contest was the price to be paid for the occupation of Casale. At length, he proposed to d'Estrades a sum of 500,000 livres, about £20,000. This was reducing the price by half, but d'Estrades was for a lower figure still; and, eventually Mattioli, knowing his master's straits, was induced to accept an offer of 100,000 crowns.

Taking the crown at a value of three francs (though it is all but impossible to determine the relative values of the moneys then in circulation), this would represent the trifling sum of £12,000. This, moreover, was to be paid only on conditions. "Finally, Sire, I brought him to content himself with one hundred thousand

crowns; and that on condition that your Majesty was not to pay them till after the treaty had been signed; and then, if you choose not to give the whole sum at once, that the Duke of Mantua should receive fifty thousand crowns first, and the remaining fifty thousand three months afterwards."

Everything else was agreed to "without difficulty." Duke Charles, in fine, was in a hurry to conclude the affair; being, says the Abbé, "in continual terror of the design, which he understands the Spaniards to have, of seizing upon his fortresses on the least pretext, and on the first favourable occasion."

The next step was to arrange the meeting between Charles and d'Estrades, and nothing hindered this but the extreme secrecy with which the affair was being conducted. Charles had come to Venice in the last days of January, but the Spaniards were watching him, and it was not until the 13th of March, 1678, that he and the Abbé contrived their interview. We see them encountering at midnight, closely masked, "in a small open space," says d'Estrades in his despatch to Louis, "which is at an equal distance from his house and mine. I was an entire hour with him." The Duke was in a

pressing haste to get the treaty ratified, from the fear that he was in of being "overwhelmed by the Spaniards." Money, money was his call: his supplies from the Spaniards were threatening to stop, and, lacking this support, he could not maintain the garrison of Casale. His sole trust, he said, was in France: When would Louis's troops appear in Italy? He was tired of the slowness of despatches, and begged that Mattioli, in whom, says d'Estrades, "he has a blind confidence," might be sent to the French court, where his presence "may bring matters to a speedier issue."

D'Estrades was put to a shift. He knew that Louis could not send in 1678 the army upon which Mantua was counting. He knew that the Duke, who was all for clinching the treaty, began to be uneasy at the length of the negotiations. Balancing the issues, he decided to let Mattioli go to Paris.

CHAPTER III.

THE TREASON OF COUNT MATTIOLI.

BUT being still under the necessity of biding his time (for Louis, with the Dutch on his hands, could send no serviceable army into Italy), the Abbé had barely made this decision when he began to devise means to delay the departure of Mattioli. Here again fortune favoured him; and the Duke was at this time so beset, harassed, and importuned by the Spaniards to declare himself against France, that Mattioli, fearful of leaving him, resolved to postpone his journey to France. This was in the third week of May (1678). On the 9th of July, d'Estrades advises Pomponne that Mattioli is to start almost immediately, and that he should reach Paris in September. "We have calculated the time together, and he cannot and ought not to leave his master sooner." Mattioli himself begins to be apprehensive

"that these delays may give a bad opinion of him": they were, in truth, just what the French designs required.

Towards the end of the month the Duke is in attendance on his Duchess-mother, ill of a fever. "If God should call her to Himself, the affair of Casale would without doubt be more easy to conclude." However, the lady lives; and the affair continues to move. Mattioli does not cease to assure the Abbé that the Duke is "always firm in his design of putting himself under the protection" of Louis—of which, indeed, there was very little question.

Still, Mattioli cannot get off to France. The Abbé himself precedes him thither: partly, it would seem, on a holiday, and partly in connection with the negotiations. He is succeeded at Venice by Pinchesne, from whose first despatch to Pomponne—September 3rd, 1678—we learn that Mattioli has been ill, but hopes soon to be able to commence his journey to the Court. Nine days later, it is Mattioli who writes concerning his illness to Louis, deploring the further delay it has occasioned him. "The eagerness I have is extraordinary, to be

able with all possible celerity to throw myself at your Majesty's feet."

It is the 29th of October before we know that he is actually off: Pinchesne has news of him "written from Berheta on the 26th of this month." Meanwhile, as late as November 18th, Paris has not yet beheld him. "Neither the Count Mattioli nor the Sieur Giuliani," writes Pomponne from Versailles, "is yet arrived here." At the end of the month Mattioli was really in Paris.

No time was lost now in drawing to a close. D'Estrades was already in Paris; and with him and M. de Pomponne, Charles's minister had several interviews. A treaty was quickly agreed upon, of which the following were the chief stipulations:—

1. That the Duke of Mantua should receive the French troops into Casale.

2. That if Louis XIV. sent an army into Italy, the Duke of Mantua should be appointed generalissimo.

3. That upon the execution of the treaty, the sum of one hundred thousand crowns should be paid to the Duke of Mantua.

Altogether a wonderful bargain from the standpoint of the King of France. For a mere £12,000 or so, he acquired a splendid fortress which, with the one that was already his at Pignerol, would enable him to control the destinies of Northern Italy. The Court may well have been astonished at the terms, and at the ease and rapidity with which the whole affair had been concluded. Moreover, so skilfully had it been contrived, on the part of Pomponne, of d'Estrades, of Pinchesne, and of the small number of the Duke of Mantua's abettors, that no whisper of the plot had reached the Duchess Dowager or any of her circle.

Mattioli was admitted to secret audience by Louis, who presented him with a ring and a sum of money, and promised that his son should be a king's page, and that his brother, who was in the Church, should receive preferment.* Mattioli then prepared to return to Italy.

The secrecy which had been all along observed was still maintained. Pomponne, advising Pinchesne of the

* Delort, Ellis, Topin.

Italian's departure from France, bade him "keep the journey very secret." Varano, one of the two persons to whom the Duke of Mantua had confided the design, was advised by Pinchesne that he had a letter for his Highness from France; and Varano proposed they should meet in mask at the opera. At about the same date (we are now in the closing days of 1678) Pomponne instructed Pinchesne that he was sending him a new cipher by courier; and the old precautions were kept up.

"The courier whom I despatch to you has orders not to go to your house as a courier, but to enter Venice as a tradesman, or as a private French individual who goes there on his own business. He brings you a cipher, which you will employ only in what concerns the affairs of the Duke of Mantua. We have been afraid that, for so important a business, the cipher of the Abbé d'Estrades was too old, and had probably been discovered in the many times it passed through the territories of Milan."

The scheme having advanced thus far, Louis was now eager to see it to the end. The able Louvois, in

whom Topin discerns the finest genius for organisation up to the era of Napoleon, rapidly prepared the whole plan of action. A strong body of troops, placed under the command of the Marquis de Boufflers, Colonel-General of Dragoons, was assembled at Briançon, ready to pass the frontier. Baron d'Asfeld, Colonel of Dragoons, set out for Venice, with a commission to exchange the ratification of the treaty. Catinat, then Brigadier of Infantry,* went *"dans le plus grand mystère,"* to Pignerol, where he was to conceal himself in the fortress, and to take for the time being the name of de Richemont. The first despatch of Louvois to Saint-Mars concerning this affair has reference to the coming of Catinat. It is dated from St. Germain-en-Laye, Dec. 29th, 1678. "These few words are to inform you that it is necessary for the King's service that the person from whom you will receive this should enter the citadel of Pignerol, unknown to anyone. With this in view, let the Safety Gate** remain open until nightfall, and send him one

* Afterwards the celebrated Marshal. Voltaire says of him that he united philosophy to great military talents.

** Porte de Secours.

of your servants; or better, if you are able, go yourself to meet him at the spot to which his valet will conduct you, in order that he may pass into the citadel and dungeon in your suite, without being observed by anyone."

Louis had already written to the Duke of Mantua:—

"My Cousin,—

"The Count Mattioli will instruct you so particularly, both as to the manner in which he performed the orders with which you charged him for me, and as to the extreme satisfaction with which I have received his assurances of your zeal for my interests, that I can have nothing further to add upon these subjects. I am only desirous of stating that I wish you to place entire confidence in my friendship. You may promise yourself that it will be both useful and glorious to you upon all occasions, and you may always rely securely upon my alliance. I hope to be able to give you in the end unmistakable proofs of this. Having testified to you the satisfaction which the conduct of Count Mattioli has afforded me throughout the whole of this affair, I will

add only that I pray God to have you, my Cousin, in His high and holy keeping.

"Written at Versailles, this 8th Dec. 1678.

"LOUIS.

[and under the King's signature],

"ARNAUD."

D'Asfeld arrived in Venice on the 21st of January, 1679, and at once communicated his orders to Pinchesne; but nothing could be agreed upon until Mattioli came, who was still journeying slowly from Paris. They were, however, resolved to persuade Charles of Mantua to be at Casale by the 20th of February, to make the exchange of the treaty, and to prepare for the entry of the French troops. On the part of the French, in fine, all was now impatience where before it had been anxiety for delay. There was sufficiency of reason for this, since the massing of Louis's troops on the frontier must soon alarm the House of Austria; and, in fact, the march towards Pignerol had begun in the last days of January. But just as, when the negotiations were at an early stage, they advanced too rapidly for the pleasure and con-

venience of Louis, so now, when everything was in readiness on the French side, and Louvois's plans were actually in execution, delay arose upon delay beyond the frontier.

On reaching Italy, Mattioli was again smitten with fever, but he managed to see Pinchesne and d'Asfeld in the first week of February. Then it appeared that the Duke could not possibly go to Casale earlier than the 10th of March. He alleged, through Mattioli, (1) a want of money; (2) the fear he had of leaving behind at Mantua Don Vincent Gonzaga, his heir presumptive,* at so critical a juncture; and (3) "the obligation he found himself under of holding a sort of carousal with several Venetian gentlemen." Pinchesne, in excusing to Pomponne the apparent triviality of the third of these reasons, thinks that, after all, the spectacle of his Highness dally-

* "Vincent Gonzaga, Count of St. Paul, afterwards Duke of Guastalla, was descended from a younger son of Ferrant II., first Duke of Guastalla. After contesting for many years his right to that Duchy with Ferdinand Charles IV., Duke of Mantua (during which they were both merely made use of, by turns, as the instruments of the French and Austrian domination), he was finally successful in establishing himself at Guastalla in 1706, where he died April 28th, 1714."—Ellis.

ing with his pleasures in a season of political unquiet, may assist to draw off the suspicions which are beginning to gather about him. In any event, Charles was clearly bent upon keeping his engagement with Louis.

But the need of swift, decisive action did not diminish. "Meanwhile, Sir," runs a despatch of Pinchesne on the 18th of February, "I think it right to inform you that the march of the troops to Pignerol, and the munitions and money that are carried there, cause genuine alarm in all Italy. It is even publicly stated here that the King has some great design, allbeit no one can say what it is; suspicion falling now upon Casale, now upon Geneva, and now upon Savoy, but more particularly upon the Republic of Genoa, by reason of what has lately passed there. I even know that M. Contarini* has written in these terms to Venice." More than this, the Spanish Ambassador and the Abbé Frédéric, the resident of the Emperor, went to the Duke of Mantua and plainly told him "they had heard from Turin that he wished to give Casale and the Montferrat" to the King of France;

* Ambassador from the Venetian Republic to the Court of Louis XIV.

representing in strong terms "the disadvantages that would arise to all Italy from such an action, and particularly to the House of Savoy, on account of the Duchy of Milan." Charles denied it roundly, wondering how the gentlemen "could believe in reports of this nature"; nevertheless, adds Pinchesne, "he is always in the intention of executing the treaty he has made with the King."

But the circumstances were becoming ticklish, and Pomponne deemed it well to be more pressing with Mattioli. Addressing him on the 21st of February, he wrote: "I have not failed to inform the King of your sorrow for the long delay over an affair which was begun and is to be concluded through your agency." And he added with some significance: "His Majesty is still willing to promise himself success in this enterprise, and will entertain no doubt that the promise so solemnly given him is to be fulfilled."

Pinchesne and d'Asfeld on their part continued to ply him; and towards the end of February it was arranged that d'Asfeld and Mattioli should go on the 9th of the following month to the village of Notre-Dame

d'Incréa, ten miles from Casale, there to make exchange of the ratifications; while the Duke of Mantua should be at Casale "without fail" on the evening of the 15th, to wait for the troops of Louis (due to arrive on the 18th), and to put them in possession of the place.

By this time alarums were shaking all the north of Italy. From Turin, from Milan, from Mantua rumour, growing ever more definite, flowed in unceasingly. Suspicions, writes Pinchesne, were beginning to change into certainties that Charles of Mantua had made a treaty with Louis for the cession of Casale and the Montferrat. The Governor of Milan sends couriers flying to Madrid and Vienna to give intelligence to the Emperor and the King of Spain. "The courier to Vienna returned here* on Wednesday evening, with express orders to the Marquis Canozza, the Imperial Vicar in Italy, to speak strongly to the Duke of Mantua, and to deter him, if possible, from doing a thing so contrary to the interests of the whole House of Austria; and to go afterwards to Turin and Milan, to concert there the means of preventing it, in case the news proved true." The

* To Venice.

Duke, who showed no disposition to break his engagement with Louis, found excuses to keep the Imperial Vicar at arm's length. Pinchesne began to be in dread that the Spaniards, more and more jealous and distrustful, might oppose Charles's passage through the Duchy of Milan, and that of Mattioli, "whom they doubt as much."

But it was not on the Duke of Mantua or on Mattioli that hands were laid. Like a thunderbolt the news fell upon Versailles that d'Asfeld had been arrested on his way to Notre-Dame d'Incréa, and was held prisoner by the Governor of Milan* in the interests of the Spaniards. This was a check indeed; and now at once the suspicions of the French began to fasten upon Mattioli, who had been the first to send the news of d'Asfeld's misfortune. Louis and his agents, it is true, were unwilling as yet to consider themselves betrayed: the seizure of d'Asfeld might have been no more than an unlucky accident; the affair might still be carried through. But there was no time to lose. The 24th of March had come, and Mattioli had not gone to Notre-Dame d'Incréa

* The Count de Melgar, Spanish Governor of the Milanese.

and the Duke had not gone to Casale. D'Estrades (now Ambassador at Turin), the soul of the enterprise from the first, was sending courier on the heels of courier; to Venice, for Pinchesne; to Mantua, for the Duke; and everywhere in Northern Italy for Mattioli. Acting upon the instructions of Pomponne, the French agents in Italy were careful not to communicate to Mattioli their doubts of his good faith; but d'Estrades wrote him a letter in which the mailed hand might be felt through the glove.

"If," says the Abbé, "I had not been aware of your probity, and of your zeal for the interests of his Majesty, and for the welfare of the Prince to whom you are attached, I should have been seriously uneasy at the delay of our affair, which ought without fail, and at the latest, to have been concluded at the beginning of this month. But although we are already at the 24th, and all that you can desire on our part is in readiness, I cannot bring myself to think that his Highness's intentions and your own are other than they always were. You have so well understood how useful this affair would be to him at the present time, and how glorious in the future, and you have so ably represented this to him, that I cannot permit

myself any suspicions on this head. Neither can I, when I reflect upon the very considerable interest you have in completing an undertaking of such importance, the conclusion of which will be esteemed so great a merit on your part by the most generous and the most powerful King in the world, who has himself testified to you the good-will he bears you for it. . . . . As his word has always been inviolable, you no doubt rely implicitly upon it; you must be aware also how dangerous it would be to deceive him, and that, after all the steps he has taken, and the measures he has agreed upon, you would expose his Highness and yourself to very great misfortunes if his Majesty had reason to think that faith had not been kept with him."

But March went out, and the treaty had not been ratified; nor had Mattioli and the Duke kept their appointments. Versailles is all in profound uncertainty; as late as the 18th of April, we have Pomponne writing to Pinchesne—"It is still very difficult to discover what is the real case with this affair, and whether the good faith that was to be desired in it has been kept. Try to discover this adroitly, but without showing any suspicions; and be careful to inform me of everything that shall

come to your knowledge on the subject." Writing again on the following day, the minister makes it sufficiently plain that his own suspicions of Mattioli's treachery are confirmed; and respecting the Duke, he says: "In truth, this Prince should not be allowed to think that it is permitted him to fail in a treaty he has made with his Majesty. If the occasion should present itself, make it appear to him that you cannot doubt his keeping the promises which have been made to the King." This suggests that, with or without Mattioli, it may still be possible, in the opinion of Versailles, to bring the scheme to an issue of success.

In a moment that hope was extinguished and annihilated. Intelligence of everything that had taken place between Louis XIV. and Charles of Mantua was conveyed simultaneously to the Courts of Turin, Madrid, Vienna, to the Spanish Governor of the Milanese, and to the Inquisitors of State of the Venetian Republic.

"To all, in a word, who were most interested in opposing the execution of the project, it was known point by point: the price of the cession, the date at which it was to be made, the names of the negotiators. They knew everything, because they had received at sundry

times the confidences of the principal and best-instructed among the actors in the intrigue—of Count Mattioli himself."*

It was true—Mattioli had played the traitor. He had sold his master; he had sold and made a jest of the Omnipotence of France.

* Topin.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VENGEANCE OF "THE MOST GENEROUS" KING.

"NEVER was seen," exclaims Pomponne, in a despatch of the 3rd of May, "so signal a piece of perfidy!"

Maria Baptista of Nemours,* Duchess and Regent of Savoy, and one of her ministers, President Turki, or Trucci, were the first who had received the confidences of Mattioli. To the Duchess he had shown the original documents of the negotiations, of which she had taken copies: facts which she herself communicated to Louis XIV. Mattioli had seen the President at Turin. He had given information to the Spaniards, and had accepted a cipher from the Spanish Governor of Milan. He had had secret interviews with one of the Inquisitors of State at Venice. All this, with sundry pleas and glosses, Mattioli afterwards confessed to Catinat.**

* Mother of Victor Amadeus II., at this time a minor.

** Catinat to Louvois; May 10th, 1679.

The real motive or motives of this wholesale treason will never be clearly known, for they were never divulged by Mattioli; and we have little choice but to acquiesce in the general conclusion, which is—in M. Funck-Brentano's words—that he had cynically betrayed both his master and Louis XIV., in order to reap a double harvest of gold. Topin asks generously whether this "gross cupidity" is the sole explanation; and suggests that, "shaken to his soul, and illumined by the sudden apparition of his country in danger," Mattioli in remorse may have fallen back upon the one and only means of checking the advance of Louis. But this palliative, well as it becomes its author, is not easy of acceptance; for the conduct of Mattioli, after his return from France, bears every appearance of trickery and duplicity. If he designed to save Italy from Louis, he hid his project from his master, the Duke of Mantua; and he certainly did not return, as he should have done, the French King's presents. These are Topin's own admissions, and he has manifestly little faith in the hypothesis which his good-nature propounds.

Mattioli had presumably acted with his eyes open, but he seems to have taken no measures for his own

safety in the event of detection; and the discovery of his treason had left him in a terrible situation. Charles of Mantua repudiated him, declaring that he had never authorised any negotiations for the sale or occupation of Casale. But Charles the insouciant was scarcely a dangerous enemy; and it is probable that, while he might be willing to assist in his punishment, Mattioli had not much to fear from him. His real danger lay elsewhere. D'Estrades had beheld with feelings of mortification and intense bitterness the failure of a project in which he had had from the first, the closest personal interest. The details were his, the negotiations had been begun by him, he it was who had selected Mattioli, and it was by him that Mattioli had been introduced at the Court of France. Louvois, for his part, had been baffled in the execution of the plans he had so adroitly laid; and a French minister beaten at his own game of intrigue by an Italian adventurer was little likely to find himself in the humour of forgiveness. D'Estrades and Louvois, moreover, had acted not for themselves but for their master the King; and when the projects of Kings are confounded their ministers are very apt to be held blameworthy.

But there was a vengeance infinitely more to be

dreaded than that of either Louvois or D'Estrades. Mattioli had drawn upon himself the resentment, the implacable resentment, of Louis XIV. True, Louis had not at this time lost all hope of securing Casale; but, for the immediate present, it was not Casale that filled his thoughts: it was the unspeakable, the incredible effrontery of the man who had outwitted, cheated, and flouted him in the face of Europe. Europe was ringing with the discomfiture of Louis; Europe was silently laughing at the *Grand Monarque.* It is necessary to recall his position among the Powers of that day, the splendid successes that had attended his arms, and his almost dictatorial attitude towards the Sovereigns his contemporaries, in order to appreciate the extent of the humiliation which Mattioli's treachery had brought upon the King of France. "The most generous King" was d'Estrades's description of him. It was the unlucky fate of Nicolas Fouquet to submit to the test the generosity of Louis XIV. towards one whom he feared even in defeat. "Let us be content with banishing this man," Fouquet's judges had said. "No," said the King, "he shall end his days in prison." And that was in the green tree, and it was now the dry: Louis was in his

forty-first year. Again, what was Fouquet's offence in comparison with that of Mattioli? Fouquet had enriched himself at the State's expense, and he had courted and had won a popularity which fretted the King's complacency. But he had not broken faith with Louis, he had not contemptuously bartered his interests, he had not openly made light of that jealous and sensitive dignity—he had not given Europe the opportunity to smirk over the humbling defeat of a *Roi Soleil.* Fouquet, for his popularity in Paris, died an old, sick man, in the dungeon of Pignerol. What fate should Mattioli look for?

Abbé d'Estrades was to have the pleasure of suggesting it. He proposed to Versailles that Mattioli should be seized, abducted, and imprisoned "at the King's pleasure." Illegal arrests and imprisonments were not extraordinary in France at any date before the Revolution; but the case of Mattioli was unusual. He was, as Ellis says: "actually the plenipotentiary of the Duke of Mantua, for concluding a treaty with the King of France." Although his treachery was known, it had not been proved against him; and, from the standpoint of international law, it is not an argument that the Duke of

Mantua was a prince of no political consequence. The proposal to seize and carry off his minister was, in the circumstances, a proposal of brigandage. But it came pat to Louis's purpose and intention of revenge. He saw the illegality of it; but, if it could be effected without scandal, he asked nothing better. Absolute secrecy in the business of the arrest was all that he demanded—and his private authorisation to d'Estrades was modified only by this condition—"that you get him carried off without the least suspicion of scandal."

Satisfied by d'Estrades upon this point, Louis sanctioned the kidnapping of Mattioli. He was to be conveyed to Pignerol, and kept there "in the strictest secrecy." "Look to it," ran the closing words of the King's order, "that no one knows what becomes of this man."

This was followed by the despatch of Louvois to Saint-Mars at Pignerol, dictated by Louis, the tone of which is eloquent of the mood that inspired it:—

"Saint-Germain, April 27th, 1679.

"The King has sent orders to the Abbé d'Estrades to procure the arrest of a man with whose conduct his

Majesty has reason to be displeased. I am commanded to acquaint you with this, in order that you may not hesitate to receive him when he is sent to you. *You will guard him in such a manner that, not only may he have no communication with anyone, but that he may have cause to repent his conduct, and that no one may know you have a new prisoner.*

"DE LOUVOIS."

Instructions in these terms imposed the necessity of a ruse; but the Abbé d'Estrades, keen upon requitals, was ready there. Mattioli, whose subalpine shrewdness seems to have missed him at this highest crisis of his life, was quite unaware that Louis and his agents had unriddled him. He did not know that the Duchess of Savoy had sent to Versailles the copies of the papers he had shown her. His utter ignorance of the danger he stood in made it easy to set the trap that must catch him.

Although vengeance was certainly the first motive of Mattioli's arrest, there was another which, if the negotiations for Casale were to be proceeded with, was not un-

important. The Varano who had all along been privy to the affair, had instructed d'Estrades, through the assiduous Giuliani, that the Duke of Mantua would go no further with it while Mattioli was at large. The Duke himself appears to have been averse from, or at all events not inclined to, a personal reckoning with the agent in whom he had implicitly confided; but he was willing enough that Mattioli should be brought to book by anybody else. D'Estrades also learned from Varano that Mattioli had privately obtained Charles's signature to the treaty (for what reason, unless with an eye to blackmail, it is impossible to conjecture), and had kept the original document, with all other papers bearing on the negotiations. By what means, asked d'Estrades of Pomponne, were these likely to be secured, unless by the arrest of Mattioli? That act, therefore, while gratifying the vengeance of Louis and his ministers, would render possible a renewal of the negotiations, and would be far from displeasing to the Duke of Mantua, whom it was desirable to retain in friendship.

Mattioli was now again in Turin, where, as we have seen, d'Estrades was installed as French Ambassador; he was still visiting the Abbé, and talking and acting as

though he were as busy as ever in the matter of Casale. D'Estrades, with Nemesis in his heart, entertained him smoothly; and affected always to believe that everything was secure. Through Giuliani, who was solid throughout in the interests of the French, d'Estrades learned that Mattioli was seeking money. His expenses in France, his journeys to and fro in Italy, and his bribes to win over the Duke's mistresses, had drained his purse. D'Estrades suggested a ready means of replenishing it. Catinat (he said), who commanded the French troops that were to take possession of Casale, was furnished, by the King's order, with ample means; and was prepared, by the King's order, to meet every expense that might arise. Mattioli took the bait. "Being one of the most consummate rogues that ever lived" (*"Comme il est un des plus grands fripons qui ait jamais esté"*), wrote D'Estrades, "this hint of mine made him desperately eager to meet Catinat."

Catinat was warned, and the meeting was arranged. It was to be at a spot "on the frontier towards Pignerol" —Catinat, said d'Estrades, not being able "to leave the neighbourhood where his troops were stationed." D'Estrades, not anxious to risk his skin, stipulated for

"a few well-armed men" in Catinat's company: "as I know that Mattioli always carries two pistols in his pocket, and two others, with a poniard, in his belt."

D'Estrades gave him rendez-vous at six o'clock on the morning of the 2nd of May, 1679, at a church on the outskirts of Turin: they were to drive thence to the frontier. Unfriendly fortune led Mattioli to the meeting-place. For months he had failed in the appointments which it would have profited him to keep; but he was punctual at the one fatal tryst of his life. D'Estrades had with him in his carriage a cousin, the Abbé de Montesquieu; and in this company Count Mattioli set out for the frontier.

There had been heavy rains for three days, and the streams of that wild region were pouring over their banks. One of these, the Guisiola, not far from the spot where Catinat waited with his men-at-arms, the Abbé's party must cross; but the bridge had been damaged by the flood, and the horses could only ford the stream by swimming. This, apparently, the Abbé, precious of his charge, declined to risk; but it was possible to make the bridge safe for foot-passage, and to work they went—

Mattioli himself, says d'Estrades, "helping so bravely, that in an hour we were able to get across."

The carriage was left behind, the Abbé congratulating himself on getting rid of his servants, "as this ensured us a greater measure of secrecy." The journey was continued on foot, *"dans des chemins fort mauvais";* and Catinat, bearing in his hands the vengeance of Louis, awaited them at the chosen spot. "M. Catinat," writes the Abbé, "had made his arrangements so well that not a creature appeared with him. He led us into a room"; and then, before the real object of the meeting was declared, d'Estrades adroitly and insensibly admonished Mattioli "respecting all the original papers belonging to our affair." Mattioli, who must now at last have begun to realise his danger, said that all the papers were in a box at Bologna, in the hands of his wife, who had retired to the convent of the Nuns of St. Louis. Upon this, deeming his presence not necessary in the scene that was to follow, d'Estrades withdrew, accompanied by his cousin; and Mattioli was left with Catinat. At two in the afternoon, Saint-Mars had him under lock in the dungeon of Pignerol.

Catinat's despatch to Louvois (Pignerol, May 3rd,

1679) is of soldier-like directness:—"I arrested Mattioli yesterday, three miles from here, upon the King's territories, during the interview which the Abbé d'Estrades had ingeniously contrived between him, Mattioli, and myself, to facilitate the scheme. For the arrest, I employed only the Chevaliers de Saint-Martin and de Villebois, two officers of M. de Saint-Mars, and four men of his company. It was effected without the least violence, and no one knows the rogue's name, not even the officers who assisted. He is in the chamber which Dubreuil occupied, where he will be civilly treated, according to the request of the Abbé d'Estrades, until the wishes of the King with regard to him are known." *

Among the papers taken on Mattioli's person were

* "Finally," says M. Funck-Brentano, "we have a very curious pamphlet entitled *La Prudenza trionfante di Casale*, written in 1682, that is, little more than two years after the event, and—this slight detail is of capital importance—thirty years before there was any talk of the Man in the Mask. In this we read: 'The Secretary (Mattioli) was surrounded by ten or twelve horsemen, who seized him, disguised him, *masked* him, and conducted him to Pignerol'—a fact, moreover, confirmed by a tradition which in the eighteenth century was still rife in the district, where scholars succeeded in culling it."

none of the series emanating from Versailles. These it was essential to secure; they were the tangible proofs of Louis's failure. Mattioli had said they would be found at Bologna. They were not there. Under threats of torture and of death, the prisoner at length confessed that the original papers were at Padua, "concealed in a hole in the wall of a room, in his father's house." Thereupon a letter was dictated, in which, without a word that could betray his situation, Mattioli was made to request his father to deliver the documents to Giuliani. The father, suspecting nothing, handed them over: Pinchesne presently received them all; and they were forwarded, with rigorous care, to Versailles.

Louis XIV. was avenged. If he had received at the hands of the petty minister of a petty prince his first serious check in Europe, his retaliation had been swift and terrible. Nor did Europe enjoy for long the spectacle of the potent King's defeat. The guilty principal in the affair had already vanished from the sight and knowledge of men, into the entrails of Pignerol, and would be beheld of them no more. The official proofs of the aborted enterprise were not less secure under Louis's hands than was Mattioli in the

wardenship of Saint-Mars. The French troops had been withdrawn as secretly as they had been assembled at Briançon. The whole scheme was renounced so promptly that, in Topin's phrase, it seemed, in a manner, as though it had never been begun.* The Court of Savoy undoubtedly had a full knowledge of the intrigue; "but Louis XIV. spoke with a master's authority at Turin." Mattioli had undoubtedly made disclosures at Venice as at Milan; but those beguiling lips were sealed eternally behind the bastions and demi-lunes of Pignerol. And the affronted King bore himself as high as ever. He demanded and obtained from Spain the immediate release of Baron d'Asfeld, imprisoned at Milan; and the censure of Melgar, the governor. At all points, and in a space of time the briefest, Louis recovered the prestige which for a moment he had sacrificed; and his personal pride, at once delicate and vengeful, was best solaced by the certainty

* Not, however, that Louis had really abandoned his project. He wanted it forgotten only until such time as he could accomplish it without possibility of failure. The negotiations were resumed two years later; and on the 30th of September, 1681, the French troops were received into Casale.

that he had swept, as he thought, into eternal oblivion the agent and chief witness of his short discredit. Mattioli was given out as dead: a story was circulated that he had met with a fatal accident on a journey. The Duke of Mantua might have doubted this, and probably did doubt it; but he had sufficient reason for wishing out of his path the agent who, for objects of his own, had striven his best to ruin him with Louis XIV.

And the family of Mattioli—why were *they* silent? Upon this point, history has bequeathed us the curious legacy of an unfinished tragedy—curious to us, who can follow the tragedy to its end. Did his family also believe him dead, or were they cowed and voiceless under the stroke of Louis's wrath? It is not known. What alone is certain is, that he was never found by them again. The letter dictated to Mattioli, and signed under compulsion, was the last that his father received from him. His wife died in the convent of the *Filles de Saint-Louis* at Bologna, while he was still a hopeless prisoner: there is no record to show that his fate was known to her. The space within the genealogical tree of the family, which the date of Mattioli's death should

fill, is blank.* Louis's vengeance smote deep: in annihilating the man, it had crushed the family; and perhaps nothing is sadder in the memories of this mystery of two hundred years, apart from the fate of the Mask himself, than the wretched ignorance in which his abduction and living burial left his nearest kin.

* Topin: citing the *Arbor priscæ nobilisque masculinæ familiæ ac Mattiolis.*

CHAPTER V.

THE DUNGEON OF PIGNEROL.

Good night, good night!
Romeo and Juliet.

MAY be seen to-day, on the flanks of Alpine heights, near the source of the streams which go to form the rich basin of the Po, the ruins of the dungeon wherein Mattioli began the long night of his captivity. Close by stands the Cathedral church of Saint-Maurice, *"d'où la vue embrasse,"* says Topin, *"le plus riant horizon."*

As different as might be was the face disclosed by Pignerol on the day that Catinat carried in his prisoner through the Safety Gate—the small, secure postern which led straight into the recesses of the dungeon. A citadel, a dungeon: around the citadel a town, itself enclosed within vast fortifications, at the entrance of the valley of the Perouse, on the river Chisone, seven leagues south-west of Turin, twenty-eight from Nice, and

thirty east of Grenoble—such was Pignerol, the Piedmontese town of the 17th century.*

The little town, which, as early as the 12th century, the princes of Savoy had fortified for the surety of their possessions, climbed upwards in the form of an amphitheatre; with russet roofs and slender campaniles and clusters of turret-fashioned chimneys. A moat isolated the citadel from the town; and from the citadel the eye followed a double line of solid walls, forming a huge parallelogram, with four high towers for supports: in the midst of all, the great square keep or dungeon, black of aspect, "*aux fenêtres bardées de fer.*" The fortifications were composed of a series of bastions, half-moons, and counter-guards. The two main gates of the town were named of France and of Turin; the secret or Safety Gate was opened at rare times to admit by stealth some prisoner whose guards had been ordered not to take him through the town.

This little mountain bourg of Pignerol,** peopled by French troops and Italian subjects, was not inconsiderable in the 17th century. The officers in chief were

* Iung.

** *Ital.*, Pinerolo.

the governor-general, the commandant of the town, the King's lieutenant governing the citadel, the commandant of the dungeon, the members of the council of war, and of the *"conseil souverain;"* a fair posse for a world so tiny. There was the perpetual *va-et-vient* of a frontier place: officers from Paris or Turin, rejoining their regiments in the army of Italy, passed through; there was much traffic and some commerce.

At the time of the coming of Mattioli to Pignerol, the dungeon of that place had been for fourteen years the charge of Bénigne d'Auvergne de Saint-Mars, seigneur of Dimon and of Palteau, bailli and governor of Sens. Born in 1626, in the environs of Montfort l'Amaury, Saint-Mars died in the Bastille, its governor, September 26th, 1708, in his eighty-second year. At the age of twelve he had entered, as *"enfant de troupe,"* the First Company of the King's Musketeers. In 1650 he was a full musketeer of that Company; in 1660, brigadier; and *"maréchal des logis,"* or quarter-master, in 1664. The year following, 1665, saw him in command of the dungeon of Pignerol, in which command he continued until he went to the fortress of Exiles in 1681. Louis XIV. granted him a patent of nobility in 1673.

At the date we are arrived at (1679), Saint-Mars was in his fifty-fourth year; of sinister renown in Pignerol: the gaoler quintessentialised.

Iung calls him *"un vrai bouledogue,"* but that term is applicable chiefly in the moral sense. Observe him outwardly, as he creeps, almost a-tiptoe, through the mazes of his prison: a small shrivelled person, shadowy of figure, wizen and dark of face, little head bobbing nervously betwixt the narrow shoulders, arms and hands twitching. "A moral ugly little man, looking eighty at the least; all bent and tottering; incessantly in a passion; swearing and blaspheming horribly; inexorably cruel." This is the unsympathetic portrait left of him by Constantin de Renneville, a prisoner of the Bastille when Saint-Mars was about seventy-four. "Inexorably cruel" seems not altogether just; indeed, I find few traces of active cruelty in Saint-Mars's career as gaoler; but a man so inflexible and so callous in doing the bidding of King or minister could be nothing but the ogre of his prison.

It is proper to spare him the charge of unnecessary cruelty, for his memory is void of sympathy: on the one

side, an unimaginative pedant who has no rule for his prison but the strictest letter of his orders from Versailles; on the other, a mean and greedy type of the soldier of fortune, always whining for money and always bemoaning his lot. He had peculiar relations with the minister Louvois. His wife's sister was Louvois's mistress, and he can ask nothing of Louvois which Louvois does not grant. The ideal gaoler, harassed incessantly by fears for the safety of his prisoners, he packs his coffers with the moneys sent him for their keep. Holding them as wards of the King, whom he served like a slave, watching them so closely that he was himself a prisoner in his own prisons for over forty years, these charges of his were still, in his private view, his "sitting hens"* (*"aux œufs d'or"*); and they were a fortune to him. He left silver plate, furniture, jewels, six hundred thousands francs of ready money, and seigneurial property worth ten million francs. Among the governors of the prison-fortresses of France, most of whom enriched themselves at the cost of their prisoners and of the State, the position and the possessions of Saint-Mars were unique. As commandant of the dungeon of Pignerol

* Iung.

he held his authority directly from the minister, owing no responsibility either to the governor-general or to the King's lieutenant; as Louvois's relative (upon the left) he held the minister in fee; and what he asked of him was granted in advance.

But, as the prince of gaolers, Saint-Mars was worth humouring. His discretion was proof against all temptation; and such was his habit of distrust, in what concerned his prisoners, that the distrustful Louvois himself found it possible at times to chide his over-caution. Uneasy, timorous, and taciturn, the duties of his office gave him never a moment's rest. The King's orders were fulfilled with a servile exactitude: to discuss them, says Topin, would have seemed a crime, to seek to interpret them was superfluous. No prison wall was high enough or stout enough, no moat was deep enough or wide enough, no bars or bolts were strong enough, no sentinel was watchful enough, no spy alert enough to keep that anxious soul at rest. He carries every detail of his cares to Louvois; matters the most puerile are constantly rehearsed in his despatches. Does a stranger come to the town on business or a visit of pleasure; if his sojourn is prolonged, Saint-Mars is cer-

tain that a plot is hatching to carry off some prisoner from the dungeon. Nay, if the stranger shows some little curiosity concerning the citadel, Saint-Mars arrests him out of hand, and holds him captive during a prolonged examination. "Lists of the travellers coming to Pignerol were drawn up for him every month, that he might see what names occurred too frequently. The prisoners' linen before being sent out of the dungeon, was soaked in water, then dried before a fire in the presence of officers who had to make sure that nothing had been written upon it. The smallest change in the habits of his prisoners drove Saint-Mars into a fever of anxiety. In everything they did, and in everything they abstained from doing, he saw the signal of some criminal attempt; and one day, after his usual visit to Fouquet and Lauzun, and his rigorous examination of their rooms, discovering nothing out of the common, he was first surprised, and then exceedingly alarmed. The absence of any apparent signal was in itself a signal for him. . . . After reading his naïve and sincere correspondence, one is tempted to pity him almost as much as the prisoners in his keeping; since, enjoying a scarcely greater liberty than they did, the perpetual fears that

he suffered on their account rendered him in some sort their victim."*

Such was the man into whose hands Catinat gave Count Mattioli on the 2nd of May, 1679. "He is in the chamber which Dubreuil occupied, where he will be treated civilly, according to the request of the Abbé d'Estrades, until the King's wishes with regard to him are known." Already, however, the prisoner had lost his identity, for he was passed into Pignerol, and received there, under the name of Lestang: as Lestang, and by no other name, was he known in the fortress,—save only to Saint-Mars. "The King's wishes with regard to him" were very soon made known. In less than a fortnight from the day of Mattioli's arrest—the 15th of May—Louvois wrote Saint-Mars concerning him *". . . . that it is not the intention of the King that the Sieur de Lestang should be well treated, or that, except the absolute necessaries of life, you should give him anything to soften his captivity."* Thus "the most generous King"—whose commands are renewed on the 20th of the month. "Your letter of the 10th of this month"—it is Louvois again to Saint-Mars—"has been delivered

* Topin.

to me. I have nothing to add to what I have already commanded you respecting the severity with which the person named Lestang must be treated." Two days later, May 22nd: "You must keep Lestang in the rigorous confinement I enjoined in my former letters, without allowing him to see a doctor, unless you know he is in absolute want of one." Later, July 25, Saint-Mars receives instructions that his prisoner may have writing materials; scarcely, however, for his own solace. "You may give paper and ink to the Sieur de Lestang, with permission to put in writing whatever he wishes to say. You will then send it to me, and I will let you know whether it deserves any consideration."

From the picture that history has left us of Saint-Mars, it is easily inferred that he would read aright the instruction to treat a prisoner "with severity": but the proof itself is not wanting. We have seen that Mattioli was arrested in the beginning of May, 1679. In eight months from that time the rigours of his imprisonment had resulted in the temporary loss of his reason. He was neither the first nor the last of the State prisoners of pre-Revolutionary France whom the dungeon reduced to madness. Consider that these places were virtually

impenetrable; that there were no inspectors of prisons, no visiting justices; and that the governor in his dungeon wielded a power scarcely less tremendous than the King at Versailles. There was no system of administration under which the prisoner could stand upon his rights, with privilege of appeal beyond the prison walls; he *had* no rights—save what were granted him as peculiar favours. He depended in all things upon the governor: a miserly governor might starve and keep him cold and meanly clad; a cruel one had darker means at his disposal, and used them—the torture, the whip, the subterranean *cachot* were always there. In eight months Mattioli had grown mad.

On the 6th of January, 1680, Saint-Mars wrote to Louvois:—"I am obliged, sir, to inform you, that the Sieur de Lestang is become like the monk I have the care of; that is to say, subject to fits of raving madness; from which the Sieur Dubreuil also is not exempt." The methods of Saint-Mars were rather fatal to sanity; here were three lunatics together at one time in Pignerol. In the third week of February: "The Sieur de Lestang, who has been nearly a year in my custody, complains that he is not treated as a man of his quality, and the

minister of a great prince, ought to be. . . . . I think he is deranged, by the way he talks to me; telling me he converses every day with God and the angels; that they have told him of the death of the Duke of Mantua and of the Duke of Lorraine; and, as an additional proof of his madness, he says he has the honour of being nearly related to the King, to whom he wishes to write in complaint of the way I treat him. I have not thought proper to give him paper and ink for that purpose, perceiving him not to be in his right senses."

Versailles was quite unmoved by these recitals. Louvois, with the King behind him, was still hardening his heart. Even the consolations of religion were to be administered within the very narrowest limits imposed by the Church. "It will be sufficient to let the prisoners of the lower tower"—in which Mattioli was confined—"confess once a year." In the same despatch, the 10th of July:—"With regard to the Sieur de Lestang, I wonder at your patience, and that you should wait for an order to treat such a rascal as he deserves, when he is wanting in respect to you."

Then the mad Mattioli was put with the mad Jacobin; an economy on the part of Saint-Mars, "to

avoid the necessity of having two priests." Mattioli, imagining the monk a spy upon him, "walked about with long strides, his cloak over his nose, crying out that he was not a dupe." The Jacobin, "who was always seated on his truckle-bed, with his elbows on his knees, looked at him gravely, without listening to him"; but one day, "getting down from his bed, stark naked," he set on preaching, "without rhyme or reason"; and preached till he could preach no longer. With a naïvety of confession most characteristic, Saint-Mars adds: "I and my lieutenants saw all their manœuvres through a hole above the door."

This is a sore history, not to be too long pursued. Nearly all that is known of Mattioli's life in Pignerol is concentrated into this glimpse of the poor frenzied pair, mewed together in their narrow Bedlam, with "I and my lieutenants" watching them behind the door. Yet it was better to be mad than sane—in Pignerol—with Saint-Mars.

Fifteen years Mattioli lay here; lived fifteen years on the vapours of Pignerol. A solitary instance is recorded, pathetic enough in the circumstances, of his attempt to win over one of the lieutenants of Saint-Mars,

Blainvilliers by name, by the offer of a ring. In some raving hour the prisoner had written "abusive sentences with charcoal on the wall," and Blainvilliers had threatened him with beating. A day or two later, as the officer was serving him with dinner, Mattioli said: "*Sir, here is a little ring, which I wish to give you, and I beg you to accept of it.*" Saint-Mars, in his inevitable report to Louvois, conjectures it "well worth fifty or sixty pistoles": it was probably the ring which Mattioli had received from Louis XIV.

Concerning Pignerol, the rest is silence.

Mountain and wood and stream hem round that altitude of grey-black stone, where Louis's prisoner sits through fifteen spectral years.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INQUISITION OF JULES LOISELEUR.

It has been rightly said that the interest of Count Mattioli's captivity owes everything to the supposition that we have in him the actual Man in the Mask. So closely did the jealous anger of the King conceal him, that his life in prison, mysterious even to the creatures of Saint-Mars, has left scarcely a trace in the real history of Pignerol, of the Isles, or of the Bastille. Legend, indeed, abounds; but facts are of the scantiest. Was this in truth the Man in the Iron Mask?

Who first sought to identify him? Let us summarise briefly on this head the exhaustive perquisitions of Topin. To begin with, there is the political pamphlet already cited, *La Prudenza trionfante di Casale*, published in Cologne in 1682. Here is set forth in detail the whole negotiation, with the parts played by the Abbé d'Estrades and Mattioli, Giuliani and Pinchesne, Catinat and d'As-

feld, and the Duke of Mantua. Five years later, in 1687, a compilation issued at Leyde under the title *Histoire abrégée de l'Europe* gave the translation in French of an Italian letter denouncing the abduction of Mattioli. There is then a long interval. In 1749, Muratori, in his *Annali d'Italia*, related the history of the intrigue for Casale, and the capture of the Duke of Mantua's plenipotentiary. In 1770 appeared the letter of Baron d'Heiss in the *Journal Encyclopédique*, in which he says: "It appears that this Secretary to the Duke of Mantua might very well be the Man in the Iron Mask, transferred from Pignerol to the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite, and thence to the Bastille in 1690,* when M. de Saint-Mars became governor of that place." In 1786, the Italian Fantuzzi, in his *Notizie degli scrittori Bolognesi*, summed up what had hitherto been written on the subject. The same opinion, that Mattioli was the Man in the Mask, was sustained in the year of the Revolution by the "Chevalier de B.", in a volume entitled *Londres.—Correspondance interceptée.* In November, 1795, M. de Chambrier, who had been Prussian minister at the Court of Turin, essayed to prove in

* It was in 1698 that Mattioli came to the Bastille.

a lecture delivered to the Belles-Lettres class at the Academy of Berlin, that Count Mattioli and the Man in the Iron Mask were one and the same individual.* Just one hundred years ago appeared the pamphlet of Roux-Fazillac, who was the first to publish documents in support of his case. Much more complete, however, were the documents of Delort, whose small, well-reasoned treatise, *Histoire de l'Homme au Masque de Fer*, was published in Paris in 1825. By permission of Comte d'Hauterive, Keeper of the Archives of the Office of Secretary of State for the Foreign Department, Delort examined and made excellent use of all the despatches known at that day. The history that he drew from them seemed conclusive. It is, in effect, the true history; but, as will be seen, it is the true history with a very important error. Ellis's work, which appeared a year or two later (the second edition, which is before me, is dated 1827) was little more than an adaptation of Delort's. Camille Rousset, in his *Histoire de Louvois*, rehearses once more the story of the negotiations, and says: "We

* Mentioning the subject one day to a very intelligent German lady of my acquaintance, she replied: "Mattioli? Yes, of course. We were taught that at school."

share the opinion of those who hold that the Masque de Fer was none other than Mattioli." Depping, in his *Correspondance administrative sous Louis XIV.*, is of the same mind.

Except, however by Roux-Fazillac and Delort, there was little attempt to prove that the person arrested and carried to Pignerol on the 2nd of May, 1679, was identical with the prisoner who died in the Bastille on the 19th of November, 1703. And that, of course, constitutes the knot of the problem. "That Mattioli was seized in 1679 by a French agent, and forcibly carried to Pignerol—this, as we have seen, was a fact which had long been known. But that intrigue is no longer our sole concern: a mere preliminary of the question which engages us. What is essential is, to follow the minister of the Duke of Mantua from prison to prison, and to see not only whether he might have been, but whether it is impossible that he should *not* have been, that mysterious prisoner brought by Saint-Mars in 1898 from the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite to the Bastille, where he died in 1703. Delort believed that he had proved it. His conviction was profound, and to many his demonstration seemed irrefutable."* But the docu-

* Topin.

ments discovered by Delort did not contain the whole history; the omissions, in fact, were serious, and we are now to see how a keen examiner, detecting them, with one stroke of his pen shattered the system—and left the riddle of the Mask apparently insoluble to the end of time.

Mattioli was incarcerated in Pignerol on the 2nd of May, 1679. At this date the dungeon held, besides Fouquet and Lauzun, four other prisoners concerning whom it is necessary to note that they were quite obscure and unimportant persons. One of them, Eustache Dauger, brought to Pignerol in July, 1669, had served Fouquet in the capacity of valet. Another, the Jacobin monk whom we have seen sharing his cell with Mattioli, and who had been imprisoned in April, 1674, is branded by Louvois as "a finished rogue, whom you cannot treat badly enough." He was to have "no fire in his chamber, unless he is ill or the severity of the cold compels it, and no other nourishment than bread with wine-and-water." The two remaining prisoners were a certain La Rivière and the Dubreuil whose name has been mentioned. So insignificant were these, that when Saint-Mars was called from the government of Pignerol to that

of Exiles, Louvois asked of him a memoir furnishing their names and the reasons why they had been imprisoned. It is clearly not among prisoners of such small consideration, prisoners of whom the Minister knows neither the names nor the causes of their detention, that we shall find the Man in the Mask. Fouquet died at Pignerol in March, 1680. Lauzun was released the 22nd of April, 1681.

On the 12th of May, 1681, Louvois announced to Saint-Mars that the King had appointed him to the command of the fortress of Exiles. On the 9th of June the Minister wrote again, instructing Saint-Mars as to the precautions to be observed respecting the journey from Pignerol of those of his prisoners who were to be removed.

"His Majesty's desire is, that as soon as the room at Exiles, which you shall judge the most proper for the safe keeping of the two prisoners in the lower tower, shall be ready to receive them, you send these prisoners out of the citadel of Pignerol in a litter, and conduct them there under the escort of your troop. . . . Immediately after the prisoners' departure, it is his Majesty's

wish that you proceed to Exiles, to take possession of the government, and to settle yourself there."

Here were two prisoners to be removed. A word follows concerning "the rest of the prisoners now in your charge," which it will be important to remember at the final stage of the enquiry. "The Sieur de Chamoy," says Louvois, "has instructions to pay two crowns a day for the maintenance of these *three* prisoners." There were thus five prisoners in Pignerol on the eve of the departure of Saint-Mars for Exiles.

The prisoners to be removed were *the two prisoners of the lower tower.* The lower tower was, as we have seen, the prison of Mattioli and the Jacobin monk: what more natural, then, than to conclude that these were the two whom Saint-Mars carried with him to Exiles? This was the obvious view adopted by Roux-Fazillac, Delort, and all investigators up to the time of Topin. Was it the true one?

In the course of years the climate of Exiles affected the health of Saint-Mars; and the ever-obliging Louvois procured him a change of government. Early in 1687 he was called to the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite-Saint-Honorat, in the Sea of Provence. To the fortress of

Sainte-Marguerite he took one prisoner only. The date was the 30th of April, 1687. Delort and the rest, determined not to lose sight of their candidate for a moment, declared that this "*seul prisonnier*" must be Mattioli. No name was mentioned, and definite proof was lacking; but probability favoured the conjecture.

Let us see how it is established that one alone of the two prisoners brought from Pignerol to Exiles was carried from Exiles to the Isles. A few days before the close of 1685 (December the 23rd), Saint-Mars wrote to Louvois: "My prisoners are still ill, and under medical treatment. They are, however, perfectly tranquil." In the autumn of the following year, one of the prisoners was dropsical. "You ought to have told me," writes Louvois, October 9th, 1686, "which of your prisoners has become dropsical." He writes again on the 3rd of November: "It will be proper to let your dropsical prisoner be confessed, when you are certain that his end is near." In the first days of January, 1687, the prisoner died. "I have received your letter of the 5th inst.," writes Louvois (January 13th, 1687), "which informs me of the death of one of your prisoners. I will say no more concerning your desire for a change of

government, since you have already learned that the King has been pleased to confer on you a better post than the one you are in possession of." The death of one of the prisoners brought by Saint-Mars from Pignerol to Exiles is thus demonstrated. Was it Mattioli or the other? Delort and his contemporaries concluded, positively for the most part, that it was the other.

They overlooked, however, one fact of the extremest significance. It was, that from the date of this death at Exiles *Mattioli's name disappears entirely from the correspondence of Louvois and Saint-Mars.* Now there may be nothing absolutely conclusive in this; but, taken with the testimony of the death, it seems to plunge into hopeless uncertainty every system which has sought to solve through Mattioli the mystery of the Man in the Mask. Such was the terribly destructive criticism of Jules Loiseleur, in the *Revue Contemporaine,** a criticism which demolishes those systems in a fashion the most decisive. If Mattioli and the monk were the two prisoners whom Saint-Mars carried to Exiles (and we have seen that their removal was ordered by Louvois); if one of the pair died of dropsy at Exiles in January,

* July 21st, 1867.

1687 (and the document in proof has been cited); and if from this date Mattioli's name vanishes from the letters of Louvois and Saint-Mars—with what confidence may it be pretended that Mattioli was the masked man borne in secret by Saint-Mars to the Bastille in September, 1698? "His domonstration," wrote a contemporary critic of Loiseleur, "at once luminous and peremptory, has exhausted the question; and, in default of fresh documents, no serious mind will ever return to it." Topin confesses that after reading and re-reading this demonstration,* he could resolve no otherwise than that the secret of the Mask was and would remain impenetrable.

* Refuted, nevertheless, by him in so far as concerned Loiseleur's hypothesis of the arrest of the spy by Catinat.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MISSING LINK REVEALED BY TOPIN.

COMES the question then: has the Man in the Mask once more and finally eluded us? Let us go a step further. Baudry had said of the inquisition of Loiseleur, that it had exhausted the problem; that, if other documents were not forthcoming, no serious mind would return to its consideration. But it has been stated before, and the statement must be repeated, that the whole truth of this strange drama was not contained in any single set of documents. Louis XIV. was little likely to leave us the epitome of it; and no minister who had part in the affair ever forgot the King's command to d'Estrades: *Il faudra que personne ne sçache ce que cet homme sera devenu,—No one must know what becomes of this man.* His very name had already disappeared, save only for those few who had known it from the first. At

Pignerol, he was Lestang; in the Bastille, he was *the prisoner from Provence.* Apart from the brief but pregnant documents of the Bastille, to be presented when their time comes, his identity was only to be made good by the comparison of innumerable despatches, "not one among which furnishes by itself an irrefutable proof, but which in their entirety, with the logical deductions that may be drawn from them, conduct to an absolute certainty."*

But there could be no doubt that, after Loiseleur, fresh documents were necessary, if this certainty were ever to be attained. These documents were found by Topin. The passage in which he explains how he first imagined their existence, and then went on to prove it, is peculiarly interesting, as showing both his extreme mental ingenuity and the inexhaustible patience with which he pursued a task now regarded as well-nigh impossible of completion. There comes first a letter, of which, at sight, the significance is less than nothing: a letter from Louvois to Saint-Mars, dated January 5th, 1682. At this time Saint-Mars has been but a few months at Exiles; but he is already clamour-

* Topin.

ing for a change of government, and has evidently been sounding Louvois on the subject. Louvois replies:

"I received your letter of the 28th ult. You do not know where your interest lies, when you propose to exchange the government of Exiles against that of Casale, the value of which is only two thousand livres a year.* I strongly advise you not to think further of it."

There is no more in the despatch than that. It suggests nothing but the interest of Louvois in the personal fortunes of Saint-Mars, whose sister-in-law was the minister's mistress. Saint-Mars, incessantly grasping (and suffering in health at Exiles), seeks another change of place: Louvois responds that the change he proposes will put nothing into his purse. It is the letter, not of the minister to the gaoler, but of the minister to his friend: it is a strictly personal communication. What, then, is its value as a counterpoise to the criticism of Loiseleur, which showed—upon the documents put in —that Mattioli, if he did not die of dropsy at Exiles, did at all events disappear incontinently from the despatches which, up to this point, had been almost solely occupied with him?

* The amount which Saint-Mars was receiving at Exiles.

The supposition is still, of course, that Mattioli was one of the two prisoners whom Saint-Mars carried with him from Pignerol to Exiles. Just here, however, the doubt comes in that suggested itself to Topin. If Mattioli were with Saint-Mars at Exiles, what more imprudent than that he should propose to take him—an Italian subject forcibly stolen from Italy—into an Italian town, and a town Mantuan in its hereditary interests! If it were in any way possible that Mattioli should discover himself to friends, he would at least have a better chance of doing so in Casale than at Exiles. How did this not occur to Saint-Mars? And, if it missed the sleepless intelligence of Saint-Mars, how came it also to be passed by Louvois? But Louvois evidently has not a thought of danger. His sole motive in dissuading Saint-Mars from Casale is that his pocket would profit nothing by the exchange. Mattioli, whom it would have been unwise to carry back into Italy, is not so much as mentioned. Then Mattioli, perhaps, *was not at Exiles at all, and had never been sent there?* This was the inspiration that Topin drew from the colourless despatch of Louvois.

The chance of success in this direction was a very feeble one; for the despatch of Louvois was extant,

ordering the removal of the two prisoners of the *tour d'en bas*, the lower tower, to which Mattioli and the monk had been relegated; and the despatch had closed with the injunction that "the effects belonging to the Sieur de Mattioli which are in your possession are to be taken to Exiles, so that they may be given back to him, should his Majesty ever decide to set the prisoner at liberty." This was categorical.

Still, Topin's doubts persisted. If Mattioli were indeed at Exiles, how could Saint-Mars propose to transfer him to Casale? And how did Louvois let that proposal pass unrebuked? With these questions pricking him, Topin returned to the *Bibliothèque Impériale* to begin the search anew—and the missing link revealed itself.

It was found in a letter from Saint-Mars to d'Estrades, bearing date June 25th, 1681. Saint-Mars, the least gregarious of men, had sworn an ardent friendship with the Abbé, and he hastens to share with him the news of his appointment to Exiles. "Count on me as your most devoted. I received yesterday the warrant appointing me to the governorship of Exiles, at a salary of two thousand livres. . . . I am to take with me two jail-birds*

* "*Deux merles.*"

whom I have here. . . . . Mattioli remains where he is, with two other prisoners. One of my lieutenants, named Villebois will have charge of them."

Mattioli, therefore, was not the prisoner who died at Exiles in January, 1687. He never went to Exiles at all. The purpose indicated in Louvois's despatch, of the 9th of June, 1681, had been abandoned; and Mattioli remained at Pignerol, where he will be found in the keeping of Villebois. The long silence of Louvois and Saint-Mars concerning him thus receives its natural explanation.

The perplexity, the scepticism which Loiseleur's examination had produced, vanished upon this discovery. Mattioli was at Pignerol and at the Isles and in the Bastille; Delort's error, which for a time cast into uncertainty the whole history of the Mask, lay in removing him from Pignerol to Exiles. There are two traits or characters in the history of the Mask which attach themselves to Mattioli alone, of all the prisoners whom Saint-Mars had in his keeping: the unvarying tradition of his detention at Sainte-Marguerite, and the documental certainty of his detention at Pignerol. In Du Junca's journal, the prisoner whom Saint-Mars brings to the Bastille in

September, 1698, is *an ancient prisoner whom he had at Pignerol.* Exiles finds no place in the entry. We know that Saint-Mars had Mattioli in his charge during two years at Pignerol, and Topin has shown that the prisoner was not transferred to Exiles. But for that unfortunate error, which is principally identified with Delort, the problem might long since have been resolved.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRISONER OF CONSEQUENCE.

MOST visitors to the Riviera have made the little trip to the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite and Saint-Honorat, enticed by the piquant legend of the Man in the Iron Mask. A good woman discovers you his cell, charms you and thrills you with stories of his fine apparel, his plate, and the deference shown him by Saint-Mars: poor Mask, who had no fine clothes and no plate, and whom the deferential gaoler had threatened with a cudgel! The Isles owe most of their celebrity to what is purely fabulous in this history, but they have other annals also.

Lying some fifteen hundred yards from the shore, the two islands, of which Sainte-Marguerite is the larger, are as sentinels over the pleasure-haunts of Nice, Cannes, and San Remo. Rock and reef lend some amount of danger to the approach. Within, the Isles are dark with

pine-trees, cumbered and strengthened with shaggy hills, gigantic boulders. Climbing Sainte-Marguerite's top, the traveller's eyes are filled with a marvellous golden light; before him undulates on either hand all that sun-bathed shore of the Riviera; he counts the glistening villas of Cannes; grey-green hills of olive rise beyond; to the left streams out the long chain of the Esterel, "with contours brusque and varied;" and on the right the Maritime Alps cast up their "thousand years of snow."

The Romans were here once; hermits have dwelt in these island solitudes; the Saracens have invaded and the Spaniards have sacked them.* In the dawn of the fifth century Saint-Honorat founded here a monastery, greatly celebrated of the Gauls, where "thousands of apostles" practised virtue and the monkish arts. On the smaller island is still shown the well which the saint created, yielding miraculous sweet water. Here came Francis I., prisoner of the Spaniards after the disastrous field of Pavia, to endure a harsh captivity. Here, to Sainte-Marguerite, was sent, in December, 1873, Marshal Bazaine, who broke prison and escaped the night of the

* Topin.

9th of August, 1874. The two islands bear the common name of the Iles de Lérins. The memory of the Iron Mask, whose prison was the fortress of Sainte-Marguerite, has conferred on the Lérins a celebrity which seems likely to endure.

Hither, then, came, in 1687, the most incorruptible gaoler Saint-Mars. He had received word of his new appointment on the 20th of January; he was in ill-health, and eager for the healing South. He wrote to Louvois: —"I am most grateful for the new favour which his Majesty has just bestowed on me (the Government of the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite). If you order me to proceed there without delay, I would request to be allowed to take the road through Piedmont, on account of the great quantity of snow that lies between this place and Embrun." He went to Sainte-Marguerite in February, and was twenty-six days in bed, "with a continual fever."

Mattioli, this while, supposed at Exiles, lay close in Pignerol. We have glimpses of the guard that was kept upon him. Villebois, chained to his prisoner, seems never to have been allowed to leave the dungeon. In such a nervous fit as Saint-Mars was almost incessantly

a prey to, he wrote to Louvois, asking to whom he should entrust the prisoner, supposing he were incapacitated by sickness; and Louvois replied: "To the person you can most rely on." Even the priest of the prison was distrusted—"Your prisoners are to be confessed only once a year." Books of devotion might be given to them; but "you are to take care they do not use them for passing notes to one another." One night someone is suspected of haunting a bastion gate of Pignerol, and Villebois is instructed to "do your utmost to discover who the person was." There is a rare effort of Mattioli —the only one that records prove—to disclose his situation: he writes something on a lining torn from his pocket. It is discovered, and communicated to Versailles, and the answer is returned—"You must burn any scraps on which Mattioli has written." The walls of Pignerol, and the road beneath, were strictly watched; the sentinels had orders to let no one linger about the gates.

Saint-Mars, on his part, while at Exiles, had enjoyed a measure of liberty that he had never known when guarding Mattioli at Pignerol. He went on little visits to d'Estrades, to Catinat; he paid his court to the Duke of Savoy; he was allowed from time to time to sleep

out of the gaol. "Madame de Saint-Mars having told me," writes Louvois, in March, 1685, "that you wish to go to the baths of Aix-en-Savoie, I spoke about it to the King, and his Majesty commands me to say that you may absent yourself from Exiles for that purpose for a period of from fifteen days to three weeks." Even at the Isles, at first, Saint-Mars was comparatively at his ease. "The King consents to your taking a holiday two days in the month, and permits you to return the visit of the governor of Nice." These were the relaxations of the period when Saint-Mars had charge only of "two jail-birds."

On a sudden, the 26th of February, 1694, there is a mandate from Versailles, informing the commandant that three prisoners of State are to be sent from Pignerol to the Isles. The minister* enquires "if there are safe places to hold them," and bids the governor make all needful dispositions to receive them. A second letter, March the 20th, contains a passage of capital significance: "You know in effect that they are of greater consequence, *at least one*, than the prisoners now at the Isles; and,

* This was Barbezieux, the successor of Louvois, who died in 1691.

preferably to those others, you should see that they are lodged in the most secure quarter of the prison. The courier who bears this despatch takes with him also fifteen hundred livres for preliminary expenses."

Thus was announced the coming of Mattioli, with the two remaining prisoners of Pignerol.

The great Louis, who took his vengeances cruelly, was falling on his evil days. The disruption was beginning which should end in the cataract of the Revolution. In Italy the situation had been sadly modified since the epoch at which Louis had first sought to treat as autocrat for the purchase of Casale. He no longer spoke there with a master's voice; "his arms had ceased to be ever-victorious, and he was already expiating his impolitic and inopportune intervention in the affairs of the Peninsula"; Casale must be abandoned; Pignerol, too—that "precious acquisition of Richelieu," which had been practically a French town for sixty years.

Mattioli in the heart of his dungeon felt the effects of the King's reverses. The restoration of Pignerol by Louis explains his removal to the Isles. Once more, however, a deep secrecy falls upon him; he is never at this time alluded to by name in the despatches. "Now

more than ever, in a word, was it imperative to hide from the sight and knowledge of all, this victim of an audacious and inexcusable violation of the rights of men. Europe's discontent with Louis XIV. was extreme; his interest lay in appeasing this discontent; and in these circumstances it was of the last importance to cover with an impenetrable mystery an existence which recalled at once the dangerous ambition, the audacity, and—not less than these—the humbling of a great king."

Never, accordingly, were such extraordinary precautions taken for a journey of this nature. The Marquis d'Herleville, governing the citadel of Pignerol, and the Comte de Tessé, commanding the French troops in that place, had orders "to furnish the escort, and the monies necessary for the expenses of the road"; and it was strictly enjoined upon de Tessé "that he should not seek to know the names of the prisoners." A strong escort was provided; two sure guides were sent in advance; and the governor of the dungeon of Pignerol went with the litter of the prisoners, with instructions to let no one but himself attend on them. Thus they came mysteriously to the Isles.

In that litter so closely escorted, three prisoners fared, one of whom was *of greater consequence than the others*. Now, after the death of Fouquet and the release of Lauzun, there was not at Pignerol any considerable prisoner save Mattioli. Note, too, that when Saint-Mars went to Exiles, it was to Villebois that the charge of Mattioli was assigned—Villebois, who had shared with Catinat the mission of arresting him: further, that on the death of Villebois, it was another of Saint-Mars's lieutenants, Laprade, who was sent from the Isles as governor of the dungeon of Pignerol. Saint-Mars had therefore not lost sight of his ancient prisoner; he had been in touch with him throughout. At Exiles, and during the first period of his command at the Isles, Saint-Mars, with the King's permission, had quitted his charge when it pleased him: there comes from Pignerol this prisoner of consequence, and Saint-Mars leaves the Isles no more. "From this moment," says Topin, "Saint-Mars never stirs from his prison." At this time, too, Barbezieux, who has not until now displayed the least anxiety, is solicitous of knowing what would befall at the Isles should sickness overtake Saint-Mars. New measures of precaution are proposed by Saint-Mars, and

approved by the minister. The bolts from the dungeon of Pignerol are sent to Sainte-Marguerite. Time does not weaken this scrupulous watch, as appears by the following significant despatch from Versailles, November 17th, 1697:—

"I have received with your letter of the 10th of this month the copy of the one written you by Mons. de Ponchartrain concerning the prisoners who are at the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite, in accordance with the King's orders, signed by him or by the late Mons. de Seignelay. You have simply to address yourself to the safe keeping of all the persons entrusted to you, *and to see that no one ever learns what your ancient prisoner has done.*"

Can the words "your ancient prisoner" bear any meaning save one: a prisoner who was formerly in your keeping and who has again been confided to you? The phrase could not possibly apply to the prisoner whom Saint-Mars had brought to the Isles, for he arrived there in 1687, and it was scarcely to be supposed that at the end of ten years the inhabitants of Sainte-Marguerite had grown suddenly curious as to the cause of his detention. But their curiosity was natural

enough in respect of the three who had arrived in the midst of that formidable escort, for whose reception extensive preparations had been made, and one at least of whom had been lodged in the strongest part of the prison.

The passage from Topin which follows seems definitely to clinch the argument:—

"Pignerol was given up to the Duke of Savoy shortly after the arrival of the new prisoners at the Isles. I have searched during the ten years (1698-1708) which followed the departure of Saint-Mars for the Bastille, all the despatches exchanged between Lamothe-Guérin, his successor at the Isles, and the Court of Versailles. The name of Mattioli is nowhere to be found in them, nor is there mention of any prisoner of importance left behind by Saint-Mars."

We know that Mattioli was at Pignerol at the end of 1693 (only a few months before the removal of the three prisoners), for it was in December of that year—the 27th—that the minister was in communication with Laprade about the prisoner's attempt to write something on the lining of his clothes. The three who were transferred in 1694 were all old prisoners of Saint-Mars, and

Mattioli alone among them possessed any consideration. When, therefore, Saint-Mars is strictly bidden to keep from everyone the knowledge of "what your ancient prisoner has done," there is but one conclusion to draw —that the reference is to the affair which Versailles continued to call "the treason of Count Mattioli."

CHAPTER IX.

THE SILVER DISH.

BOTH at the Isles and in the Bastille, the life of Mattioli—if life it may be called—seems to have been as wretched, as inexpressibly blank, as in the dungeon of Pignerol. The despatches say nothing more of madness; but, by the time he came to the Isles, Mattioli had suffered during fifteen years a form of captivity which might have shattered, and which must certainly have enfeebled, the very strongest intellect. One of the most grievous pains of imprisonment under the old *régime* must have been the total lack of profitable or engaging employment. The tasks of prison, during a long sentence of penal servitude, are seldom cheerful, and cannot but be monotonous; but they do at least fill the greater portion of the convict's life, they stay his mind from too much brooding, and they offer to industry a means of climbing from an inferior to a higher

class. But the prisoners of State under the French monarchy had no tasks, and could only with difficulty create their occupations or their recreations. And the history of Mattioli is desolate above the average. If his mind were not dead within him, his existence during all those years is terrible to contemplate. Guiding ourselves solely by the light of proved despatches, rejecting absolutely all such evidence as will not stand that test, we find scarcely a trace of solace or relief in that protracted martyrdom. A few "books of devotion," grudgingly doled out; the yearly visit of a priest: that is all. In this respect, as in others, the history of Mattioli is nearly without a parallel. Of how many prisoners of State is it recorded that, during a captivity of years, they neither found nor were granted any means of softening the unutterable solitude of prison? Fouquet read and wrote; procured herbs and plants from the hills, and dabbled in pharmacy; and was at last united to his family. Mirabeau in Vincennes composed that devastating essay on Lettres de Cachet which foreshadowed the Revolution. Condé cultivated pinks. Cardinal de Retz played chess, and received his friends. Trenck carved scrolls and mottoes on his cups. Voltaire

polished verses. Pellisson's spider is famed. Latude and others tamed pigeons, rats, and mice. Bunyan and Cervantes found an immortality in the dungeon. The annals of the Bastille embrace one dainty love-affair, that of Mdlle. de Launay (the Madame de Staal that should be) and the young Chevalier de Ménil. Diderot in Vincennes received the visits of Rousseau and D'Alembert, and talked Plato and Socrates with them in the garden. In days near our own, Louis Napoleon called the fortress of Ham his University. Even in the prisons of Russia, within the stretch of recent memory, prisoners of both sexes have contrived to communicate freely by means of a pre-arranged code of raps.

But between Mattioli and all the living, the gulf is absolute. Four-and-twenty years revolve for him in a silence almost unbroken. Intellect and the "life of life in the heart" must staunch and be swallowed up in that appalling and incredible sterility of existence. Time scarcely modifies in any degree the pitiless character of his captivity. During four-and-twenty years he seems not to have seen one friendly face; and it is almost certain that not a message ever reached him from the world which he had lost.

One day in those loathed seats was the pattern of all. Saint-Mars has left us in a letter to Barbezieux a precise account of the manner in which, when he was ill or otherwise engaged, his lieutenants waited on the prisoners:—

". . . . . The first of my lieutenants, who takes the keys of the prison of *my ancient prisoner*, with whom we commence, opens the three doors and goes in. The prisoner politely hands him the plates and dishes, laid one on another, and the lieutenant has only to pass through two doors to give them to one of my sergeants, who places them on a table two steps away, where is the second lieutenant, who examines everything that comes into and goes out of the prison, and sees that nothing has been written on any of the vessels. After they have given him the utensil, they make a thorough examination of the bed, then of the gratings and windows of the room; and very often the prisoner himself is searched. After inquiring civilly whether he wants anything, they lock the doors, and visit the other prisoners in like manner."

The "ancient prisoner," Mattioli, is here in the strictest solitary confinement, and it is evident that

these perfunctory visits of Saint-Mars or his lieutenant —with the humiliating accompaniment of the daily search—represent his sole intercourse with his fellow-men. An existence so barren, so deadly drear, as that of a Mattioli or a Prisoner of Chillon, may be a fit theme for tragic poetry, but is of little service to the makers of romance. Fable accordingly has always been extremely busy with this prisoner of Saint-Mars, who was for generations the most mysterious creature in history. Things true or partly true of other prisoners have grouped themselves around his memory; other things speak only for the imagination of their inventors. The legend of the silver dish (which includes Papon's variation) belongs to the period of Sainte-Marguerite. Already referred to, it has a foundation in fact, but does not touch the history of the Mask. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685, had filled the prisons of Louis XIV. with those French Protestants and their clergy who had not fled the country; and many ministers of the proscribed faith were sent from time to time to Sainte-Marguerite. It was through one of these prisoners for his faith that the tale of the "silver dish" arose. A certain Salves, unknown to history in any

other relation, is the source it traces from. Along with a companion unnamed, Salves fell in trouble with Saint-Mars, who, in accordance with his invariable rule, posted the matter to Versailles. Nothing escaped Saint-Mars; for what he did not see his lieutenants did not dare to withhold from him; and all went in detail to the King.

"The first of the Protestant ministers who have been sent here," he wrote (June 4th, 1692), "sings psalms night and day at the top of his voice, to let it be known who and what he is. I forbade him several times, on pain of punishment; and I have had to punish him at last. I have taken a similar course with his comrade Salves, who has a mania for scribbling, and who has written things on his pewter vessels and on his linen, to publish it that he is imprisoned unjustly for his religion."

Out of this petty memorandum from the gaoler to the minister two writers have furnished the most sensational incident in the legend of the Iron Mask. Voltaire's fisherman came off with his life, it is true: Père Papon's monk did not; and there are so few points at which the memory of Saint-Mars makes appeal to us

that it is grateful to spare him the charge of that imaginary murder.

With the story of the silver dish is linked, in the popular fancy, the story of the laces and fine linen. There is not a hint of this in the despatches, and nothing that Saint-Mars omits to mention is to be received; for he is little less than childish in his incessant appeals to Versailles on every point that concerns even the obscurest of his prisoners. It is a corollary of Voltaire's libel on Anne of Austria, but it has not the basis even of that remote history of the silver dish. A solitary figment of Voltaire, it goes with the rest of his invention. The first order of Louis XIV. will be remembered, that Mattioli should have nothing "except the absolute necessaries of life"—among which it is improbable that either Louis or Louvois would include the frills and laces of the age.

Point by point, what is legendary in the record of the Mask gives place to history. Tradition has found him with a guitar, and old prints depict it; but every picture of the Man in the Mask is a fantasy, and no guitar passed unsanctioned into any prison of Saint-Mars.

To the fifteen disintegrating years in Pignerol were joined four at the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite; day yielding ever to night in the prisoner's life through all that tragic cycle. And fate had not yet done with him.

CHAPTER X.

THE MASK COMES TO THE BASTILLE.

On the first of March, 1698, Saint-Mars received from Versailles the offer of the government of the Bastille. The salary was rich, the office one of trust and dignity, and Paris was Paris: Saint-Mars accepted the offer at once. Nothing further passed until the 17th of June, when Barbezieux wrote again from Versailles:—

"I have been long in answering your letter of the 8th of last month, as the King had not explained his intentions to me. I am now to inform you that his Majesty is pleased at your acceptance of the government of the Bastille. You can have everything in train to be ready to start when you receive the final word; and bring with you in all security your ancient prisoner.

"I have arranged with Mons. Saumery to give you two thousand crowns for the transport of your effects."

On the 19th of July there came a third despatch from Barbezieux, confirming what had gone before, and emphasising the importance of guarding the prisoner on the journey "in such a manner that he shall be seen by no one." Two months later, in the middle of September, when the days were shortening, Saint-Mars set out with him to traverse the whole of France. At this point the reflection arises that had the affair of the Mask been a scandal of the Court, and the prisoner a person whose features revealed a royal origin, it would have been strangely and curiously imprudent to bring him to a dungeon in the heart of Paris—where chance might so much more easily discover him than in that distant fastness lapped by the Sea of Provence. There could be no grave reason why the Italian Mattioli should not be carried to the Bastille; there was every prudent reason of State why a brother of the King should not be carried there. But, as we shall see, it was unquestionably the Man in the Mask who made the journey with Saint-Mars.

A glance at the map of France will show what a journey this was at the jog-trot pace of the litter. No detailed itinerary exists, but we know where the prin-

cipal halt was made. In the central department of Yonne is the town of Villeneuve-le-Roi, once called the Anteroom of the Popes, now desolate and lifeless. Near Villeneuve is the *château* of Palteau, a property belonging to Saint-Mars, and here he halted with his prisoner.* Reference has been made in the Introduc-

* Saint-Mars was not the man to loiter on the road, with a prisoner of State in his keeping, and it is unlikely that the stay at Palteau exceeded a night or two. But wherever the Masked Man came legend laid hold upon his memory, and Villeneuve-le-Roi has appropriated him. There is in Villeneuve a vast old ruined fort, with castellated drum-towers, and cells and chambers in abundance. Now Saint-Mars and the Mask would probably take Villeneuve on their way to Palteau; at all events, that close-guarded litter, watched with an awful wonder from Provence to Paris, must have passed very near. What more apt than to imagine for the Mask a period of captivity in the fort of Villeneuve-le-Roi! It has been done. In a pleasant volume of wanderings, "In the Rhone Valley," Mr. Charles W. Wood tells how he was shown the cell by a nun, as her *pièce de résistance.* "Most interesting of all was a small remote doorway, and the nun looked wonderfully picturesque as she bent down and applied the key to the lock, her black graceful dress standing out in strange contrast with the ancient and splendid masonry. Then she threw open the door and we entered a dark circular chamber that was half cell. In tones that thrilled her hearers and echoed in the roof, she said: 'This is the room in which the Man with the Iron Mask was confined, before he was taken to another and more open part of the fort.'" Mr. Wood, accepting the statement in good faith, adds: "We almost felt on sacred ground."

tion to the letter of M. de Formanoir de Palteau, grand-nephew of Saint-Mars, in which this episode is described. The letter, bearing date June 19, 1768, was addressed to Fréron, of the *Année Littéraire,* and published in the issue of June 30.

"In 1698," writes M. de Palteau, "M. de Saint-Mars passed from the charge of the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite to that of the Bastille. On his way, he stayed with his prisoner on his estate at Palteau. The Man in the Mask came in a litter which preceded that of M. de Saint-Mars; they were accompanied by several men on horseback. The peasants went to greet their lord; M. de Saint-Mars took his meals with his prisoner, who was placed with his back to the windows of the dining-room which overlooked the courtyard. The peasants whom I questioned could not see whether he wore his mask while eating, but they took note of the fact that M. de Saint-Mars, who sat opposite to him, kept a pair of pistols beside his plate. They were waited on by one manservant, who fetched the dishes from the ante-room where they were brought to him, taking care to close behind him the door of the dining-room. When the prisoner crossed the courtyard, he aways wore the

black mask; the peasants noticed that his teeth and lips showed through it;* also that he was tall and had white hair. M. de Saint-Mars slept in a bed close to that of the masked man."

There could be nothing simpler than this statement. The writer has no hypothesis of his own, and no leaning towards any other hypothesis. He is content to report what he had learned by word of mouth from the old people on the estate who had actually seen the prisoner in the mask at Palteau.** The detail of chief importance in the account is the mask; and this is verified by the entry in Du Junca's journal, when the veiled prisoner arrives at the Bastille. We have kept touch of this prisoner so far, and have found under his velvet mask no features but those of Mattioli. A prisoner of particular consequence is transferred from Pignerol to the Isles, and at the date of his removal there is only Mattioli of consequence in that prison.

* Clearly, the little velvet half-mask which may be seen to-day at any *bal masqué* in Carnival.

** The *château* of Palteau still stands where it did. The dining-hall in which Saint-Mars faced his prisoner, with pistols by his side, is now, says M. Funck-Brentano, a kitchen.

His name ceases, but he is identified with the "ancient prisoner" of subsequent despatches. This "ancient prisoner" is the one whom Saint-Mars is instructed to carry from the Isles to the Bastille. The prisoner alights at Palteau, and it is observed by the peasants on the estate that he wears a mask. The journey ends at the Bastille; and Du Junca, the King's Lieutenant of the prison, notes in his journal that the prisoner whom Saint-Mars brings from the Isles is an ancient prisoner whom he had at Pignerol, and that he is masked. Even in the Paris of that day the use of the mask was not unknown; but there is absolutely no other instance in French history of its employment to conceal the identity of a prisoner: hence the naïve wonder which may be read between the lines of Du Junca's entry.

This note in the register or journal kept by the King's Lieutenant of the Bastille is, as M. Funck-Brentano observes, "the origin and foundation of all that has been printed on the question of the Iron Mask." The journal itself (the original is in the Arsenal Library) is the work of an unlettered official who spells atrociously, and knows nothing of punctuation. When

a new prisoner was received Du Junca wrote down the particulars of his coming, and the first of the entries with which this history is concerned is as follows, in a translation as literal as possible.

"On Thursday, 18th September (1698), at three in the afternoon, M. de Saint-Mars, governor of the *château* of the Bastille, presented himself for the first time, coming from his government of the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite-Honorat, having with him in his litter a prisoner who was formerly in his keeping at Pignerol, whom he caused to be always masked, whose name is not mentioned: on descending from the litter, he had him placed in the first chamber of the Bazinière tower, waiting until night for me to take him, at nine o'clock, and put him with M. de Rosarges, one of the sergeants brought by the governor, alone in the third chamber of the Bertaudière tower, which I had had duly furnished some days before his arrival, by order of M. de Saint-Mars: the aforesaid prisoner will be served and seen to by M. de Rosarges, and maintained by the governor."

Such is the famous entry which records the coming

of the Mask to the Bastille. He passed in there as mysteriously as he had entered Pignerol nineteen years earlier, and the Isles in 1694. That the staff of the Bastille had not the least idea who he was is rendered certain by the names he received from them. He was "the Prisoner from Provence," most often; sometimes "the ancient prisoner"—the term so closely identified with Mattioli. It is clear that at first his isolation was as rigorous as it had ever been. Rosarges alone waited on him. No fellow-prisoner shared his captivity in the third chamber of the Bertaudière tower. What tales would filter through the Bastille, what fables would begin to grow around him, even while he sat there—the unknown who wore the mask!

But time was passing even for the Man in the Mask. Casale was no longer French; the negotiations which had issued so fatefully for Mattioli were old history; the whole affair was out of mind: its importance had utterly ceased. Note how this affected the Mask in 1701, twenty-two years after he had been thrown into Pignerol. No pardon came for him, nor was he granted the ease in his dungeon which was allowed at last to Fouquet. His fate was infinitely more pitiful; he fell

from his estate in the prison, he was degraded among the commonest of the Bastille's inmates.

He had been confined in the third chamber of the Bertaudière tower. From this he was removed, the 6th of March, 1701, to make room for one Anne Randon, "*devineresse et diseuse de bonne fortune,*" witch and fortune-teller: the Man in the Mask displaced by a common sorceress! He was then put by Du Junca, whose Journal is the authority, into "the second Bertaudière," which he shared with a certain Thirmont or Tirmont. This man, embastilled in July, 1700, had been a domestic servant; he was only nineteen years of age, and had been accused of atheism and black magic, and of corrupting young girls: quite an ordinary type of the rogue and charlatan of the age. Some six weeks later these two were joined by a third prisoner. The entry is in Du Junca's Journal. "Saturday, April 30, at about nine in the evening, M. Aumont the younger came, bringing with him and handing over to us a prisoner named M. Maranville, but calling himself Ricarville, formerly an officer in the army, a malcontent, a tattler, and a rake; whom I received by the King's orders, sent through the Comte de Pontchartrain, and

placed with the man Tirmont, in the second chamber of the Bertaudière tower, along with the *ancient prisoner,* both being under lock and key."

The Bastille of this date held accommodation for no more than forty-two prisoners, separately confined. In 1701 it was excessively full, and three prisoners were locked into one chamber: the servant Tirmont; Maranville *alias* Ricarville, whom the police report described as "of a beggarly appearance"; and the Man in the Mask. In October, 1708, Maranville was sent from the Bastille to Charenton prison, where he died. Tirmont was transferred in December, 1701, to the horrible Bicêtre, half-prison, half-madhouse. He became insane two years later, and died in 1709.

Now, for a moment, let this situation of the Mask, cheek by jowl with this sorry pair, be considered in the light of the Legend. It is an awkward situation for the Legend! The prisoner has been immured twenty-two years, in a seclusion the strictest and most cruel, his name and his identity withheld from everyone, for the reason that he is the depository of some tremendous secret of the State. He has been hidden under a mask all this time, because, forsooth, if he were not so

disguised, he would be recognised as the brother of Louis XIV. And lo! this holder of the dread secret, this royal twin or bastard who so fatally resembles the King, is suddenly sent to keep company with two gaol-birds of the Bastille. The prison becomes crowded, a lady in trouble for telling fortunes is among the new arrivals; and of so much greater consequence is she than this redoubtable prisoner who has been under seal for two-and-twenty years, that his room in the Bertaudière is immediately assigned to her. The fortune-teller has the dignity of a separate chamber; the Mask is thrust in with the lackey Tirmont, and Maranville presently makes a third. The two common fellows are by-and-by moved from the Bastille—having had the fullest opportunity of learning and disseminating that stupendous secret. This is not a little curious—considered in the light of the Legend. What, indeed, becomes of the Legend?

But if the reader is with us in this inquiry, with Delort and Topin and M. Funck-Brentano, this decline in importance of the prisoner who had hitherto been all-important has already received its explanation. With the lapse of time, the man and the political intrigue he

had been concerned in had quite ceased to be of consequence to anybody. Mattioli had no secret to reveal. Should he divulge the affair of Casale? No one at that date would have been a penny the worse. Should he speak of his long and torturing captivity? Alas! captivities as harsh as his were none so rare at that era: pity indeed the tale might excite; it could excite no extreme degree of wonder. In fine, at the epoch of 1701 the prisoner of the Mask had nothing to communicate which could disturb for an instant the repose of Versailles;—and they suffered him to sink to the level of those vulgar delinquents who passed in and out of the Bastille.

This fact, which we owe to M. Funck-Brentano's scrutiny of the Journal of Du Junca, disposes of the interesting tale that, after the prisoner's death, everything in his room was burned, "linen, clothes, cushions and counterpanes;" the flooring taken up and the walls scraped and whitewashed again. We have just seen his room in the occupation of the adventuress Randon, which would be upon the order of Saint-Mars; and that heedful man is not at all concerned to know whether his prisoner—who may henceforth be shifted anywhere

—has left behind him any trace of his identity. Were this anything but fiction, it would be found in Du Junca. He is a Pepys in minuteness whenever he finds matter for his pen; his details of the prisoner's death in 1703 are precise, but he has nothing else to tell. If, after the prisoner's death, his cell had been even white-washed, we should have learned it from Du Junca, who wrote everything that came to his knowledge, but with no more notion than Pepys that he was writing for posterity. The story, in fact, traces, through Père Griffet, to a Major of the Bastille, Chevalier by name, who did not come upon the scene until 1749. For many years it was accepted, but it vanishes in the search-light of M. Funck-Brentano, and is now but an item of the Legend. It is self-evident that there was no motive for destroying the traces of a prisoner who, two years before his death, had been given ample opportunity to reveal himself, and who was thenceforth insignificant.

This tragedy was now very near its closing scene. So far as records are concerned, the two remaining years are blank; and the imagination does not willingly attempt to re-create them. For the spectacle of the

Mask degraded from his eminence of mystery, cast unregarded among the coarser tenants of his dungeon, affects the mind, perhaps, even more painfully than the vision of him, solitary in his Alpine cell, or vainly interrogating the waters of the Isles; narrowly surveyed, the veritable prisoner of State. Hope must have fled him for years; we do not find him petitioning Louis, or appealing to Charles of Mantua: he sat "with close-lipped patience," or, if patience had not found him, it were better to know nothing of what passed within that lonely brain.

Under date of the 19th of November, 1703, Du Junca wrote, in the Register which he reserved for entries of the death or liberation of prisoners of the Bastille*:—

"The same day, November 19th, 1703, the prisoner unknown, masked always with a mask of black velvet, whom M. de Saint-Mars, the governor, brought with him from the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite, and whom he had had for a long time, happening to be rather unwell yesterday on coming from mass, died this day at about

* The translation is as literal as is possible.

ten o'clock in the evening, without having had any serious illness; indeed it could not have been slighter. M. Giraut, our chaplain, confessed him yesterday, and is surprised at his death. He did not receive the sacrament, and our chaplain exhorted him a moment before he died. And this unknown prisoner, confined so long a time, was buried on Tuesday at four in the afternoon, in the cemetery of St. Paul, our parish; on the register of burial he was given a name also unknown. M. de Rosarges, major, and Arreil, surgeon, signed the register."

A marginal note to the left of the entry ran as follows:—

"I have since learnt that he was named on the register M. de Marchiel, and that the burial cost 40 livres."

The entry in the register of Saint Paul's, discovered later, reads:—

"On the 19th (1703) Marchioly, aged forty-five or thereabouts, died in the Bastille, whose body was buried in the churchyard of St. Paul, his parish, the 20th of

this month, in the presence of M. Rosage (*sic*), major of the Bastille, and M. Reglhe (*sic*) surgeon major of the Bastille, who signed.—

"*Signed*: ROSARGES, REILHE."

The written names in the entry are examples of the slovenly, inaccurate spelling of the age. The person who sets them down is ignorant even of the names of the two officers of the Bastille by whom his register is signed: Rosarges is "Rosage," Reilhe is "Reglhe." "Marchioly" is remarkably close to Mattioli when it is remembered that Saint-Mars would probably have given the name by word of mouth; it is still closer if he spoke it, as he often wrote it in his despatches—"Martioly" instead of Mattioli. In the despatches of Louvois it is sometimes "Marthioly," which, with the difference of a letter, is the name on the register. In others, it is "Matioli," "Matheoli," &c. All proper names were stumbling-blocks to the writers of despatches in that era; whether educated like Louvois, half-educated like Saint-Mars, or as totally unlettered as Du Junca.

The age assigned to the prisoner, "forty-five *or thereabouts*," instances again the utter indifference and lack

of care with which these entries were made. Probably, however, no one in the Bastille, not even Saint-Mars, knew Mattioli's age. Born in 1640, he was sixty-three at the date of his death. According to Delort, he told the apothecary of the Bastille that he was sixty; a close guess for one who had lost count of time for near a quarter of a century.

So fades and vanishes that tragic figure.

CHAPTER XI.

Q. E. D.

If there had been no mask in the case? The fascination of the history has centred there. Had Saint-Mars not carried his prisoner from the Isles to the Bastille in that provoking domino, his story, like enough, had never engaged the curiosity of the world. Stories as sinister and sad have oozed from the shades of the Bastille, of the Conciergerie, of Bicêtre, of the Châtelet —stories which never had audience, or which have lain for generations among forgotten things. But the mask has perpetuated itself; and, so simple as it proves, it has kept alive, through an infinity of changes, the memory of the prisoner whom it hid.

And the mask was really nothing.

From the instrument of torture invented by Voltaire, it shrinks to the little fashionable shield of black velvet which every Italian gentleman had in his wardrobe;

which was *de rigueur* in Carnival time; and which both Mattioli and the Duke of Mantua used as a matter of course in their private interviews with d'Estrades. In the Legend, the mask is everything: in the true, documentary history of the Masked Man it figures scarcely at all. We know from Du Junca's Journal that the prisoner was masked when he entered the Bastille; but this is the first official notice on the subject. No document attests that he wore the mask at Pignerol or at the Isles. Saint-Mars does not anywhere allude to it; nor is there any injunction about a mask in any despatch from Versailles. Louis XIV. never gave the order which has been attributed to him; Louvois never gave it; Barbezieux never gave it. Up to the date of the entry into the Bastille, the mask seems to have been not much more than an accident of the history; there is only the statement in the *Prudenza trionfante di Casale* that the prisoner was masked by the persons who arrested him.

We have it from Du Junca that in the Bastille the prisoner was "masked always." Without the least straining at the facts this may be interpreted to mean that he wore his mask whenever there was occasion for him

to be seen. And this the prisoner may have done of choice; there are times and seasons in prison when it would be a convenience and a relief to possess this ready means of disguising oneself.

Père Griffet, chaplain of the Bastille in 1745, observes in his *Méthode de l'histoire:* "There is nothing to show that he was obliged to wear his mask when alone in his chamber, or in the presence of de Rosarges or the governor, by whom he was perfectly well known." If compelled to wear it at all, "it would only be when he crossed the courtyard to attend mass, in order that he might not be recognised by the sentinels, or when some person on the staff, not privy to the secret, was sent into his chamber." On the whole, it might be conjectured that the mask was an inspiration of Saint-Mars when he fetched his prisoner from the Isles to the Bastille, and that it was afterwards adopted by the prisoner himself, who secured thereby the slight liberty or relief of the incognito.

But, let the origin of its employment have been what it may, this velvet vizor was to bear a part not less than astonishing in the fable of the Masked Man. This was not only natural, but, in a sense, inevitable.

I believe that the Legend itself had no other genesis than the mystery of the mask. The sense of surprise which it produced in Du Junca was immediately communicated to the whole staff of the Bastille. Time flowed, but the mask was still the great memory and tradition of the fortress. The prisoner himself—"Marchiel," "Marchioly," Mattioli—remained unknown: Du Junca's Journal was not yet laid bare, the St. Paul's register was a sealed book, the State documents had not become the nation's property. But the steady, continuous, and provocative tradition of the mask lived on within the walls of the Bastille. There it was found by the many students, philosophers, and men of letters who lay behind those bolts for longer or shorter terms in the eighteenth century. Voltaire was imprisoned in the Bastille in 1717, and again, for a few days (most unjustly), in 1726. Here, in the very theatre of the mystery, these inquisitive, keen minds got the earliest inkling of it; and one poor shred of fact was even then gathering to itself both surmise and invention. It is an officer of the Bastille who sees in imagination the stripping and rehabilitating of the prisoner's cell: where, then, would the flight of a Voltaire end?:

—whose was the face beneath the mask? The men of letters, released from the Bastille, fastened on this rare enigma; and those among them who saw here a means of involving in new discredit the imperious sovereignty of Louis XIV., rose gladly to the opportunity. The mask, and the reason of the mask: these were the things to account for. So, unquestionably, did the Legend begin to be.

But now, at last, was Mattioli indeed the man? It was objected to Topin, that the complete silence on this subject of the copious Saint-Simon (who has peeped into almost every cupboard in the Court of Louis XIV.) made an important count against him. Topin shrewdly saw that Saint-Simon's silence made, not against, but for him. "That immortal gossip has in truth lighted up for us the very holes and corners of Louis XIV.'s Court. From its pettiest shifts to its innermost intrigues, nothing has escaped him; nothing that had to do with inner France. But of foreign affairs he knew only those that concerned the end of the reign, when they were in the hands of his friend the Marquis de Torcy. Earlier than this, he was as ignorant of what passed beyond the borders of France as he was in-

timate with everything that passed within them. His silence, then, which would be more than strange if it were possible to trace the Mask to a family of France, is its own interpretation if the prisoner were a foreigner, arrested beyond the French frontier, and as early as 1679."*

This is distinctly suggestive; though, as testimony, it has of course, only a negative value. We come closer. At whatever point in the enquiry the mysterious prisoner is named, there has Mattioli been found; and to no other among the prisoners of Saint-Mars has the term proved applicable. The political *rôle* of Mattioli has been defined, the circumstances set forth in which he fell under the vengeance of Louis XIV., and incurred that terrible punishment—inflicted, as Maurice Boutry says, *"dans si grand secret."* We have the King's order for his arrest with the particular injunction that no one is ever to know what becomes of him; we have Catinat's report of the seizure of Mattioli, so well contrived that even the officers who assisted him were ignorant of the prisoner's name; we have the witness of the *Prudenza trionfante di*

* Topin.

Casale, in which the transaction is described from the beginning. This was the man whom Louis XIV. destined to end his life in prison, and from the hour that he entered Pignerol he has been observed, followed, step by step, to the night of his death in the Bastille.

But this is not all. The proof does not end here. It is shown in the Journal of Du Junca that the prisoner whom Saint-Mars brought masked from the Isles was an ancient prisoner who had been in his keeping at Pignerol, the first of Mattioli's three dungeons, and the one in which he remained when other prisoners were transferred with Saint-Mars to Exiles. Du Junca has made Pignerol essential in the history of the Mask. We come now to the axiomatic proof of M. Funck-Brentano. The reader was asked to bear in mind the despatch of Louvois to Saint-Mars (June 9, 1681) enclosing instructions for the journey of the two prisoners who were to be taken from Pignerol to Exiles. The despatch speaks then of the prisoners who were left, and their number is precisely shown, the Sieur du Chamoy having orders to pay "two crowns a day for the maintenance of *these three*

prisoners." It is certain then that there were just five prisoners in Pignerol on the eve of Saint-Mars's departure for Exiles, and since we know from Du Junca that the Mask was an old prisoner of Saint-Mars at Pignerol, it is among these five that we must inevitably find him. All the five are known to us; their names have happened in these pages:—

THE FIVE PRISONERS.	THEIR FATE.
EUSTACHE DAUGER.	A prisoner of so little consequence that he was assigned as a servant to Fouquet in Pignerol, while Mattioli, in the same prison, was still in the strictest seclusion.
LA RIVIÈRE.	Died in December, 1686.
THE JACOBIN.	Died at the close of 1693.
DUBREUIL.	Died at the Isles, 1697.
MATTIOLI.	

A Euclid could give the result no plainer. As M. Funck-Brentano observes, with a just complacency, it is mathematical. There are five: the first is dismissed on his merits; the three that follow are dead before

Saint-Mars sets out for the Bastille—and Mattioli alone remains. *De facto*, it was Mattioli whom Saint-Mars conveyed in the mask from the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite to the Bastille in 1698. Mattioli was the hidden prisoner whom we have kept touch of throughout.

There are two very curious corroborations of the documentary evidence, deriving their value from the fact that they antedate by many years the earliest mention of the name of Mattioli. The last King of France who appears to have known the history was Louis XV. Importuned by the Duc de Choiseul to reveal the prisoner's name, the King would only say that "all the conjectures which had been hitherto upon this subject were false." Madame de Pompadour was then engaged to press for a definite reply; and the King at last informed her that the prisoner of the mask was the *"Minister of an Italian Prince."**

Still more explicit is Madame Campan, in the

* Dutens: *La Correspondance Interceptée.* On the other hand, in the "Memoirs" of Baron de Gleichen, Louis XV. is represented as refusing to give up the secret. If he knew it, there was no reason why, at this date, he should *not* give it up.

Memoirs of Marie Antoinette. During the first few months of his reign Louis XVI. was much occupied, says Madame Campan, with the revision of his grandfather's papers. He had promised to share with the Queen "whatever he might find upon the history of the Man with the Iron Mask, who, he thought, had become so inexhaustible a source of conjecture merely because of the interest which a celebrated writer had excited in the detention of a prisoner of State."

"I was with the Queen," continues Madame Campan, "when the King, having finished his researches, told her that he had found nothing in the secret papers which bore in any way on the existence of this prisoner; that he had referred to M. de Maurepas, whose age brought him nearer the time when the affair must have been known to the ministers, and that M. de Maurepas had assured him that the prisoner was merely a person of a very dangerous character by reason of his intriguing spirit, and *a subject of the Duke of Mantua.* He was enticed to the frontier, arrested, and kept a prisoner, *first at Pignerol, and then in the Bastille."**

* Madame Campan adds: "Such was in fact the real truth

There, in five lines, Madame Campan has given us the entire history, and in terms literally and absolutely correct. She does not know the name of Mattioli, she is writing at a time when no one in France knows it, and when there has not been as yet a single word about him in connection with the mystery of the Mask; yet the whole truth is there. It is Duke Charles's envoy: d'Estrades lures him to the frontier: Catinat arrests him; Saint-Mars has him at Pignerol, at the Isles, and in the Bastille. It is Mattioli's story in a nutshell. Madame Campan's sympathy with her subject nowhere betrays her into loose or inaccurate

about the man on whom people have been pleased to fix an iron mask. And thus was it related in writing, and published by M——, twenty years ago. He had searched the *depôt* of foreign affairs, and there he had found the truth: he had laid it before the public; but the public, prepossessed in favour of a version which attracted them by the marvellous, would not acknowledge the authenticity of the true account. Everyone relied upon the authority of Voltaire: and it is still believed that a natural or a twin brother of Louis XIV. lived a number of years in prison with a mask over his face. The whimsical story of this mask, perhaps, had its origin in the old custom, among both men and women in Italy, of wearing a velvet mask when they exposed themselves to the sun. It is possible the Italian captive may have shown himself sometimes upon the terrace of his prison with his face thus covered."

statements; and had she been inventing in this instance it would have been the most extraordinary example of invention in all literature.*

With the official documents which bear them out, these pregnant passages make good the case.

So the task is ended, the burden of the mystery rolls off: Mattioli the Italian takes the place of that impossible, romantic creature who has so long usurped it. The historic truth of the affair is best, though we lose a Prince who never lived. For a tragi-coloured myth we exchange a living tragedy; a tragedy prolonged above the ordinary miseries of men. The punishment of Mattioli, through four-and-twenty years, for a single act of treachery, the effect of which was

* In the essay in the *Révue des Études Historiques*, June-July, 1899, in which he substantiates the proofs of M. Funck-Brentano, Vicomte Maurice Boutry has produced a confirmatory passage from the *Souvenirs* of the Marquise de Créquy. Summing up a discussion on the Iron Mask between Marshal de Noailles, the Duchess de Luynes, the Duc de Broncas and others, the Marquise adds: "The leading and best-informed persons of my time always considered that that famous history had no other foundation than the capture and imprisonment of the Piedmontese Mattioli. Voltaire's details are the most ridiculous fable." Interesting, but of most questionable authenticity. *Was* there ever a Marquise de Créquy?

transient, takes something from the splendours of the reign in which it was inflicted.

With his unfailing sense of dramatic contrast, Topin has noted that at the very hour of Mattioli's unheeded death on a pallet in the Bastille, Charles of Mantua arrived on a visit to Louis XIV. Did Louis, who lavished on his guest the riches of the Luxembourg, tell him the fate of his ancient favourite? It would have been heard by Charles as carelessly as Louis would have told it. Scarce a bowshot from the palace, two turnkeys of the Bastille were trailing Mattioli in the dusk to a grave in the churchyard of St. Paul.

THE END.

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Author of "Democracy" (Am.).

Democracy 1 v.

Author of "Demos," *vide* George Gissing.

Author of "Diary and Notes," *vide* Author of "Horace Templeton."

Charles Dickens, † 1870.

The Pickwick Club (with Portrait) 2 v. — American Notes 1 v. — Oliver Twist 1 v. — Nicholas Nickleby 2 v. — Sketches 1 v. — Martin Chuzzlewit 2 v. — A Christmas Carol; The Chimes; The Cricket on the Hearth 1 v. — Master Humphrey's Clock (Old Curiosity Shop; Barnaby Rudge, etc.) 3 v. — Pictures from Italy 1 v. — Dombey and Son 3 v. — David Copperfield 3 v. — Bleak House 4 v. — A Child's History of England (2 v. 80 M. 2,70.) — Hard Times 1 v. — Little Dorrit (with Illustrations) 4 v. — The Battle of Life; The Haunted Man 1 v. — A Tale of two Cities 2 v. — Hunted Down; The Uncommercial Traveller 1 v. — Great Expectations 2 v. — Christmas Stories, etc. 1 v. — Our Mutual Friend (with Illustrations) 4 v. — Somebody's Luggage; Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings; Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy 1 v. — Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions; Mugby Junction 1 v. — The Mystery of Edwin Drood (with Illustrations) 2 v. — The Mudfog Papers, 1 v. — The Letters of Charles Dickens, ed. by his Sister-in-law and his eldest Daughter 4 v. — *Vide* also Household Words, Novels and Tales, and John Forster.

Charles Dickens & Wilkie Collins.
No Thoroughfare; The Late Miss Hollingford 1 v.

Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield, † 1881.
Coningsby 1 v. — Sybil 1 v. — Contarini Fleming (with Portrait) 1 v. — Alroy 1 v. — Tancred 2 v. — Venetia 2 v. — Vivian Grey 2 v. — Henrietta Temple 1 v. — Lothair 2 v. — Endymion 2 v.

Ella Hepworth Dixon.
The Story of a Modern Woman 1 v.

W. Hepworth Dixon, † 1879.
Personal History of Lord Bacon 1 v. — The Holy Land 2 v. — New America 2 v. — Spiritual Wives 2 v. — Her Majesty's Tower 4 v. — Free Russia 2 v. — History of two Queens 6 v. — White Conquest 2 v. — Diana, Lady Lyle 2 v.

L. Dougall (Am.).
Beggars All 2 v.

Ménie Muriel Dowie.
A Girl in the Karpathians 1 v.

A. Conan Doyle.
The Sign of Four 1 v. — Micah Clarke 2 v. — The Captain of the Pole-Star, and other Tales 1 v. — The White Company 2 v. — A Study in Scarlet 1 v. — The Great Shadow, and Beyond the City 1 v. — The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes 2 v. — The Refugees 2 v. — The Firm of Girdlestone 2 v. — The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes 2 v. — Round the Red Lamp 1 v. — The Stark Munro Letters 1 v. — The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard 1 v. — Rodney Stone 2 v. — Uncle Bernac 1 v. — The Tragedy of the Korosko 1 v. — A Duet 1 v. — The Green Flag 1 v. — The Great Boer War 2 v.

Professor Henry Drummond, † 1897.
The Greatest Thing in the World; Pax Vobiscum; The Changed Life 1 v.

Dunton, *vide* Th. Watts-Dunton.

The Earl and the Doctor.
South Sea Bubbles 1 v.

The Earl of Dufferin.
Letters from High Latitudes 1 v.

Edward B. Eastwick, † 1883.
Autobiography of Lutfullah 1 v.

Maria Edgeworth, *vide* Series for the Young, p. 29.

Mrs. Annie Edwardes.
Archie Lovell 2 v. — Steven Lawrence, Yeoman 2 v. — Ought we to visit her? 2 v. — A Vagabond Heroine 1 v. — Leah: A Woman of Fashion 2 v. — A Blue-Stocking 1 v. — Jet: Her Face or Her Fortune? 1 v. — Vivian the Beauty 1 v. — A Ball-room Repentance 2 v. — A Girton Girl 2 v. — A Playwright's Daughter, and Bertie Griffiths 1 v. — Pearl-Powder 1 v. The Adventuress 1 v.

Amelia B. Edwards, † 1892.
Barbara's History 2 v. — Miss Carew 2 v. — Hand and Glove 1 v. — Half a Million of Money 2 v. — Debenham's Vow 2 v. — In the Days of my Youth 2 v. — Untrodden Peaks and Unfrequented Valleys 1 v. — Monsieur Maurice 1 v. — A Night on the Borders of the Black Forest 1 v. — A Poetry-Book of Elder Poets 1 v. — A Thousand Miles up the Nile 2 v. — A Poetry-Book of Modern Poets 1 v. — Lord Brackenbury 2 v.

M. Betham-Edwards, *v.* **Betham.**

Edward Eggleston (Am.).
The Faith Doctor 2 v.

Barbara Elbon (Am.).
Bethesda 2 v.

George Eliot (Miss Evans — Mrs. Cross), † 1880.
Scenes of Clerical Life 2 v. — Adam Bede 2 v. — The Mill on the Floss 2 v. — Silas Marner 1 v. — Romola 2 v. — Felix Holt 2 v. — Daniel Deronda 4 v. — The Lifted Veil, and Brother Jacob 1 v. — Impressions of Theophrastus Such 1 v. — Essays and Leaves from a Note-Book 1 v. — George Eliot's Life, edited by her Husband, J. W. Cross 4 v.

Author of "Elizabeth and her German Garden."
Elizabeth and her German Garden 1 v. — The Solitary Summer 1 v.

Mrs. Frances Elliot, † 1898.
Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy 2 v. — Old Court Life in France 2 v. — The Italians 2 v. — The Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily 1 v. — Pictures of Old Rome 1 v. — The Diary of an Idle Woman in Spain 2 v. — The Red Cardinal 1 v. — The Story of Sophia 1 v. — Diary of an Idle Woman in Constantinople 1 v — Old Court Life in Spain 2 v. — Roman Gossip 1 v.

Author of "An Englishwoman's Love-Letters."
An Englishwoman's Love-Letters 1 v.

Henry Erroll.
An Ugly Duckling 1 v.

E. Rentoul Esler.
The Way they loved at Grimpat 1 v.

The Authors of "Essays and Reviews."
Essays and Reviews. By various Authors 1 v.

Author of "Estelle Russell."
Estelle Russell 2 v.

Elsa D'Esterre-Keeling.
Three Sisters 1 v. — A Laughing Philosopher 1 v. — The Professor's Wooing 1 v. — In Thoughtland and in Dreamland 1 v. — Orchardscroft 1 v. — Appassionata 1 v. — Old Maids and Young 2 v. — The Queen's Serf 1 v.

Author of "Euthanasia."
Euthanasia 1 v.

Juliana Horatia Ewing, † 1885.
Jackanapes; The Story of a Short Life; Daddy Darwin's Dovecot 1 v. — A Flat Iron for a Farthing 1 v. — The Brownies, and other Tales 1 v.

Author of "Expiated."
Expiated 2 v.

F. J. Fargus, *vide* Hugh Conway.

F. W. (Dean) Farrar.
Darkness and Dawn 3 v.

Authors of "The Fate of Fenella."
The Fate of Fenella, by 24 Authors 1 v.

Percy Fendall, *vide* F. C. Philips.

George Manville Fenn.
The Parson o' Dumford 2 v. — The Clerk of Portwick 2 v.

Henry Fielding, † 1754.
Tom Jones 2 v.

Five Centuries
of the English Language and Literature: John Wycliffe. — Geoffrey Chaucer. — Stephen Hawes. — Sir Thomas More. — Edmund Spenser. — Ben Jonson. — John Locke. — Thomas Gray (vol. 500, published 1860) 1 v.

George Fleming (Am.).
Kismet 1 v. — Andromeda 2 v.

Archibald Forbes, † 1900.
My Experiences of the War between France and Germany 2 v. — Soldiering and Scribbling 1 v. — Memories and Studies of War and Peace 2 v. — *Vide* also "Daily News," War Correspondence.

R. E. Forrest.
Eight Days 2 v.

Mrs. Forrester.
Viva 2 v. — Rhona 2 v. — Roy and Viola 2 v. — My Lord and My Lady 2 v. — I have Lived and Loved 2 v. — June 2 v. — Omnia Vanitas 1 v. — Although he was a Lord, and other Tales 1 v. — Corisande, and other Tales 1 v. — Once Again 2 v. — Of the World, Worldly 1 v. — Dearest 2 v. — The Light of other Days 1 v. — Too Late Repented 1 v.

John Forster, † 1876.
The Life of Charles Dickens (with Illustrations and Portraits) 6 v. — Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith 2 v.

Jessie Fothergill.
The First Violin 2 v. — Probation 2 v. — Made or Marred, and "One of Three" 1 v. — Kith and Kin 2 v. — Peril 2 v. — Borderland 2 v.

Author of "Found Dead," *vide* James Payn.

Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler.
A Double Thread 2 v. — The Farringdons 2 v.

Caroline Fox, † 1871.
Memories of Old Friends from her Journals and Letters, edited by Horace N. Pym 2 v.

Author of "Frank Fairlegh" (F. E. Smedley), † 1864.
Frank Fairlegh 2 v.

M. E. Francis.
The Duenna of a Genius 1 v.

Harold Frederic (Am.), † 1898.
Illumination 2 v. — March Hares 1 v.

Edward A. Freeman, † 1892.
The Growth of the English Constitution 1 v. — Select Historical Essays 1 v. — Sketches from French Travel 1 v.

James Anthony Froude, † 1894.
Oceana 1 v. — The Spanish Story of the Armada, and other Essays 1 v.

Lady Georgiana Fullerton, † 1885.
Ellen Middleton 1 v. — Grantley Manor 2 v. — Lady Bird 2 v. — Too Strange not to be True 2 v. — Constance Sherwood 2 v. — A Stormy Life 2 v. — Mrs. Geralds' Niece 2 v. — The Notary's Daughter 1 v. — The Lilies of the Valley, and The House of Penarvan 1 v. — The Countess de Bonneval 1 v. — Rose Leblanc 1 v. — Seven Stories 1 v. — The Life of Luisa de Carvajal 1 v. — A Will and a Way, and The Handkerchief at the Window 2 v. — Eliane 2 v. (by Mrs. Augustus Craven, translated by Lady Fullerton). — Laurentia 1 v.

Marguerite Gardiner, *vide* Lady Blessington.

Mrs. Gaskell, † 1865.
Mary Barton 1 v. — Ruth 2 v. — North and South 1 v. — Lizzie Leigh, and other Tales 1 v. — The Life of Charlotte Brontë 2 v. — Lois the Witch, etc. 1 v. — Sylvia's Lovers 2 v. — A Dark Night's Work 1 v. — Wives and Daughters 3 v. — Cranford 1 v. — Cousin Phillis, and other Tales 1 v.

Author of "Geraldine Hawthorne," *vide* Author of "Miss Molly."

Dorothea Gerard (Madame de Longard).
Lady Baby 2 v. — Recha 1 v. — Orthodox 1 v. — The Wrong Man 1 v. — A Spotless Reputation 1 v. — A Forgotten Sin 1 v. — One Year 1 v.

E. Gerard (Madame de Laszowska).
A Secret Mission 1 v. — A Foreigner 2 v.

Agnes Giberne.
The Curate's Home 1 v.

George Gissing.
Demos. A Story of English Socialism 2 v. — New Grub Street 2 v.

Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, † 1898.
Rome and the Newest Fashions in Religion 1 v. — Bulgarian Horrors, and Russia in Turkistan, with other Tracts 1 v. — The Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem, with other Tracts 1 v.

Hal Godfrey (Charlotte O'Conor-Eccles).
The Rejuvenation of Miss Semaphore 1 v.

Oliver Goldsmith, † 1774.
Select Works (with Portrait) 1 v.

Edward J. Goodman.
Too Curious 1 v.

Julien Gordon (Am.).
A Diplomat's Diary 1 v.

Major-Gen. C. G. Gordon, † 1885.
His Journals at Kartoum. Introduction and Notes by A. E. Hake (with eighteen Illustrations) 2 v.

Mrs. Gore, † 1861.
Castles in the Air 1 v. — The Dean's Daughter 2 v. — Progress and Prejudice 2 v. — Mammon 2 v. — A Life's Lessons 2 v. — The Two Aristocracies 2 v. — Heckington 2 v.

Sarah Grand.
Our Manifold Nature 1 v.

Miss Grant.
Victor Lescar 2 v. — The Sun-Maid 2 v. — My Heart's in the Highlands 2 v. — Artiste 2 v. — Prince Hugo 2 v. — Cara Roma 2 v.

Maxwell Gray.
The Silence of Dean Maitland 2 v. — The Reproach of Annesley 2 v.

E. C. Grenville: Murray (Trois-Etoiles), † 1881.
The Member for Paris 2 v. — Young Brown 2 v. — The Boudoir Cabal 3 v. — French Pictures in English Chalk *(First Series)* 2 v. — The Russians of To-day 1 v. — French Pictures in English Chalk *(Second Series)* 2 v. — Strange Tales 1 v. — That Artful Vicar 2 v. — Six Months in the Ranks 1 v. — People I have met 1 v.

Ethel St. Clair Grimwood.
My Three Years in Manipur (with Portrait) 1 v.

W. A. Baillie Grohman.
Tyrol and the Tyrolese 1 v.

Archibald Clavering Gunter (Am.).
Mr. Barnes of New York 1 v.

F. Anstey Guthrie, *vide* Anstey.

Author of "Guy Livingstone" (George Alfred Laurence), † 1876.
Guy Livingstone 1 v. — Sword and Gown 1 v. — Barren Honour 1 v. — Border and Bastille 1 v. — Maurice Dering 1 v. — Sans Merci 2 v. — Breaking a Butterfly 2 v. — Anteros 2 v. — Hagarene 2 v.

John Habberton (Am.).

Helen's Babies & Other People's Children 1 v. — The Bowsham Puzzle 1 v. — One Tramp; Mrs. Mayburn's Twins 1 v.

H. Rider Haggard.

King Solomon's Mines 1 v. — She 2 v. — Jess 2 v. — Allan Quatermain 2 v. — The Witch's Head 2 v. — Maiwa's Revenge 1 v. — Mr. Meeson's Will 1 v. — Colonel Quaritch, V. C. 2 v. — Cleopatra 2 v. — Allan's Wife 1 v. — Beatrice 2 v. — Dawn 2 v. — Montezuma's Daughter 2 v. — The People of the Mist 2 v. — Joan Haste 2 v. — Heart of the World 2 v. — The Wizard 1 v. — Doctor Therne 1 v. — Swallow 2 v. — Black Heart and White Heart, and Elissa 1 v.

H. Rider Haggard & Andrew Lang.

The World's Desire 2 v.

A. E. Hake, *vide* Gen. Gordon.

Mrs. S. C. Hall, † 1881.

Can Wrong be Right? 1 v. — Marian 2 v.

Philip Gilbert Hamerton, † 1894.

Marmorne 1 v. — French and English 2 v.

Miss Iza Hardy, *vide* Author of "Not Easily Jealous."

Thomas Hardy.

The Hand of Ethelberta 2 v. — Far from the Madding Crowd 2 v. — The Return of the Native 2 v. — The Trumpet-Major 2 v. — A Laodicean 2 v. — Two on a Tower 2 v. — A Pair of Blue Eyes 2 v. — A Group of Noble Dames 1 v. — Tess of the D'Urbervilles 2 v. — Life's Little Ironies 1 v. — Jude the Obscure 2 v.

Beatrice Harraden.

Ships that pass in the Night 1 v. — In Varying Moods 1 v. — Hilda Strafford, and The Remittance Man 1 v. — The Fowler 2 v.

Agnes Harrison.

Martin's Vineyard 1 v.

Bret Harte (Am.).

Prose and Poetry (Tales of the Argonauts: — The Luck of Roaring Camp; The Outcasts of Poker Flat, etc. — Spanish and American Legends; Condensed Novels; Civic and Character Sketches; Poems) 2 v. — Idyls of the Foothills 1 v. — Gabriel Conroy 2 v. — Two Men of Sandy Bar 1 v. — Thankful Blossom, and other Tales 1 v. — The Story of a Mine 1 v. — Drift from Two Shores 1 v. — An Heiress of Red Dog, and other Sketches 1 v. — The Twins of Table Mountain, and other Tales 1 v. — Jeff Briggs's Love Story, and other Tales 1 v. — Flip, and other Stories 1 v. — On the Frontier 1 v. — By Shore and Sedge 1 v. — Maruja 1 v. — Snow-bound at Eagle's, and Devil's Ford 1 v. — The Crusade of the "Excelsior" 1 v. — A Millionaire of Rough-and-Ready, and other Tales 1 v. — Captain Jim's Friend, and the Argonauts of North Liberty 1 v. — Cressy 1 v. — The Heritage of Dedlow Marsh, and other Tales 1 v. — A Waif of the Plains 1 v. — A Ward of the Golden Gate 1 v. — A Sappho of Green Springs, and other Tales 1 v. — A First Family of Tasajara 1 v. — Colonel Starbottle's Client, and some other People 1 v. — Susy 1 v. — Sally Dows, etc. 1 v. — A Protégée of Jack Hamlin's, etc. 1 v. — The Bell-Ringer of Angel's, etc. 1 v. — Clarence 1 v. — In a Hollow of the Hills, and The Devotion of Enriquez 1 v. — The Ancestors of Peter Atherly, etc. 1 v. — Three Partners 1 v. — Tales of Trail and Town 1 v. — Stories in Light and Shadow 1 v. — Mr. Jack Hamlin's Mediation, and other Stories 1 v. — From Sand-Hill to Pine 1 v.

Sir Henry Havelock, *vide* Rev. W. Brock.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (Am.), † 1864.

The Scarlet Letter 1 v. — Transformation (The Marble Faun) 2 v. — Passages from the English Note-Books of Nathaniel Hawthorne 2 v.

Mrs. Hector, *vide* Mrs. Alexander.

Author of "The Heir of Redclyffe," *vide* Charlotte M. Yonge.

Sir Arthur Helps, † 1875.

Friends in Council 2 v. — Ivan de Biron 2 v.

Mrs. Felicia Hemans, † 1835.

Select Poetical Works 1 v.

Maurice Hewlett.

The Forest Lovers 1 v. — Little Novels of Italy 1 v. — The Life and Death of Richard Yea-and-Nay 2 v.

Robert Hichens.

Flames 2 v. — The Slave 2 v.

Admiral Hobart Pasha, † 1886.
Sketches from my Life 1 v.

John Oliver Hobbes.
The Gods, Some Mortals and Lord Wickenham 1 v.

Mrs. Cashel Hoey.
A Golden Sorrow 2 v. — Out of Court 2 v.

Annie E. Holdsworth.
The Years that the Locust hath Eaten 1 v. — The Gods Arrive 1 v. — The Valley of the Great Shadow 1 v.

Holme Lee, *vide* Harriet Parr.

Oliver Wendell Holmes (Am.), † 1894.
The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table 1 v. — The Professor at the Breakfast-Table 1 v. — The Poet at the Breakfast-Table 1 v. — Over the Teacups 1 v.

Anthony Hope (Hawkins).
Mr. Witt's Widow 1 v. — A Change of Air 1 v. — Half a Hero 1 v. — The Indiscretion of the Duchess 1 v. — The God in the Car 1 v. — The Chronicles of Count Antonio 1 v. — Comedies of Courtship 1 v. — The Heart of Princess Osra 1 v. — Phroso 2 v. — Simon Dale 2 v. — Rupert of Hentzau 1 v. — The King's Mirror 2 v. — Quisanté 1 v.

Tighe Hopkins.
An Idler in Old France 1 v.

Author of "Horace Templeton."
Diary and Notes 1 v.

Ernest William Hornung.
A Bride from the Bush 1 v. — Under Two Skies 1 v. — Tiny Luttrell 1 v. — The Boss of Taroomba 1 v. — My Lord Duke 1 v. — Young Blood 1 v. — Some Persons Unknown 1 v. — The Amateur Cracksman 1 v. — The Rogue's March 1 v. — The Belle of Toorak 1 v. — Peccavi 1 v.

"Household Words."
Conducted by Charles Dickens. 1851-56. 36 v. — Novels and Tales reprinted from Household Words by Charles Dickens. 1856-59. 11 v.

Mrs. Houstoun, *vide* "Recommended to Mercy."

Author of "How to be Happy though Married."
How to be Happy though Married 1 v.

Blanche Willis Howard (Am.), † 1899.
One Summer 1 v. — Aunt Serena 1 v. — Guenn 2 v. — Tony, the Maid, etc. 1 v. — The Open Door 2 v.

Blanche Willis Howard, † 1899, & William Sharp.
A Fellowe and His Wife 1 v.

William Dean Howells (Am.).
A Foregone Conclusion 1 v. — The Lady of the Aroostook 1 v. — A Modern Instance 2 v. — The Undiscovered Country 1 v. — Venetian Life (with Portrait 1 v. — Italian Journeys 1 v. — A Chance Acquaintance 1 v. — Their Wedding Journey 1 v. — A Fearful Responsibility, and Tonelli's Marriage 1 v. — A Woman's Reason 2 v. — Dr. Breen's Practice 1 v. — The Rise of Silas Lapham 2 v.

Thomas Hughes, † 1898.
Tom Brown's School-Days 1 v.

Mrs. Hungerford (Mrs. Argles), † 1897.
Molly Bawn 2 v. — Mrs. Geoffrey 2 v. — Faith and Unfaith 2 v. — Portia 2 v. — Loÿs, Lord Berresford, and other Tales 1 v. — Her First Appearance, and other Tales 1 v. — Phyllis 2 v. — Rossmoyne 2 v. — Doris 2 v. — A Maiden all Forlorn, etc. 1 v. — A Passive Crime, and other Stories 1 v. — Green Pleasure and Grey Grief 2 v. — A Mental Struggle 2 v. — Her Week's Amusement, and Ugly Barrington 1 v. — Lady Branksmere 2 v. — Lady Valworth's Diamonds 1 v. — A Modern Circe 2 v. — Marvel 2 v. — The Hon. Mrs. Vereker 1 v. — Under-Currents 2 v. — In Durance Vile, etc. 1 v. — A Troublesome Girl, and other Stories 1 v. — A Life's Remorse 2 v. — A Born Coquette 2 v. — The Duchess 1 v. — Lady Verner's Flight 1 v. — A Conquering Heroine, and "When in Doubt" 1 v. — Nora Creina 2 v. — A Mad Prank, and other Stories 1 v. — The Hoyden 2 v. — The Red House Mystery 1 v. — An Unsatisfactory Lover 1 v. — Peter's Wife 2 v. — The Three Graces 1 v. — A Tug of War 1 v. — The Professor's Experiment 2 v. — A Point of Conscience 2 v. — A Lonely Girl 1 v. — Lovice 1 v. — The Coming of Chloe 1 v.

Mrs. Hunt, *vide* Averil Beaumont.

Violet Hunt.

The Human Interest 1 v.

Jean Ingelow, † 1897.

Off the Skelligs 3 v. — Poems 2 v. — Fated to be Free 2 v. — Sarah de Berenger 2 v. — Don John 2 v.

The Hon. Lady Inglis.

The Siege of Lucknow 1 v.

John H. Ingram, *vide* E. A. Poe.

Iota, *vide* Mrs. Mannington Caffyn.

Washington Irving (Am.), † 1859.

The Sketch Book (with Portrait) 1 v. — The Life of Mahomet 1 v. — Lives of the Successors of Mahomet 1 v. — Oliver Goldsmith 1 v. — Chronicles of Wolfert's Roost 1 v. — Life of George Washington 5 v.

Mrs. Helen Jackson (H. H.) (Am.), † 1885.

Ramona 2 v.

W. W. Jacobs.

Many Cargoes 1 v. — The Skipper's Wooing, and The Brown Man's Servant 1 v. — Sea Urchins 1 v. — A Master of Craft 1 v.

Charles T. C. James.

Holy Wedlock 1 v.

G. P. R. James, † 1860.

Morley Ernstein (with Portrait) 1 v. — Forest Days 1 v. — The False Heir 1 v. — Arabella Stuart 1 v. — Rose d'Albret 1 v. — Arrah Neil 1 v. — Agincourt 1 v. — The Smuggler 1 v. — The Step-Mother 2 v. — Beauchamp 1 v. — Heidelberg 1 v. — The Gipsy 1 v. — The Castle of Ehrenstein 1 v. — Darnley 1 v. — Russell 2 v. — The Convict 2 v. — Sir Theodore Broughton 2 v.

Henry James (Am.).

The American 2 v. — The Europeans 1 v. — Daisy Miller; An International Episode; Four Meetings 1 v. — Roderick Hudson 2 v. — The Madonna of the Future, etc. 1 v. — Eugene Pickering, etc. 1 v. — Confidence 1 v. — Washington Square, etc. 2 v. — The Portrait of a Lady 3 v. — Foreign Parts 1 v. — French Poets and Novelists 1 v. — The Siege of London; The Point of View; A Passionate Pilgrim 1 v. — Portraits of Places 1 v. — A Little Tour in France 1 v.

J. Cordy Jeaffreson.

A Book about Doctors 2 v. — A Woman in spite of Herself 2 v. — The Real Lord Byron 3 v.

Mrs. Charles Jenkin, † 1885.

"Who Breaks—Pays" 1 v. — Skirmishing 1 v. — Once and Again 2 v. — Two French Marriages 2 v. — Within an Ace 1 v. — Jupiter's Daughters 1 v.

Edward Jenkins.

Ginx's Baby, his Birth and other Misfortunes; Lord Bantam 2 v.

Author of "Jennie of 'The Prince's,'" *vide* B. H. Buxton.

Jerome K. Jerome.

The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow 1 v. — Diary of a Pilgrimage, and Six Essays 1 v. — Novel Notes 1 v. — Sketches in Lavender, Blue and Green 1 v. — The Second Thoughts of an Idle Fellow 1 v. — Three Men on the Bummel 1 v.

Douglas Jerrold, † 1857.

History of St. Giles and St. James 2 v. — Men of Character 2 v.

Author of "John Halifax, Gentleman," *vide* Mrs. Craik.

Johnny Ludlow, *vide* Mrs. Henry Wood.

Samuel Johnson, † 1784.

Lives of the English Poets 2 v.

Emily Jolly.

Colonel Dacre 2 v.

Author of "Joshua Davidson," *vide* Mrs. E. Lynn Linton.

Miss Julia Kavanagh, † 1877.

Nathalie 2 v. — Daisy Burns 2 v. — Grace Lee 2 v. — Rachel Gray 1 v. — Adèle 3 v. — A Summer and Winter in the Two Sicilies 2 v. — Seven Years, and other Tales 2 v. — French Women of Letters 1 v. — English Women of Letters 1 v. — Queen Mab 2 v. — Beatrice 2 v. — Sybil's Second Love 2 v. — Dora 2 v. — Silvia 2 v. — Bessie 2 v. — John Dorrien 3 v. — Two Lilies 2 v. — Forget-me-nots 2 v. — *Vide* also Series for the Young, p. 29.

Annie Keary, † 1879.

Oldbury 2 v. — Castle Daly 2 v.

D'Esterre-Keeling, *vide* Esterre.

Thomas a Kempis.
The Imitation of Christ. Translated from the Latin by W. Benham, B.D. 1 v.

Richard B. Kimball (Am.), †
Saint Leger 1 v. — Romance of Student Life Abroad 1 v. — Undercurrents 1 v. — Was he Successful? 1 v. — To-Day in New York 1 v.

Alexander William Kinglake, † 1891.
Eothen 1 v. — The Invasion of the Crimea 14 v.

Charles Kingsley, † 1875.
Yeast 1 v. — Westward ho! 2 v. — Two Years ago 2 v. — Hypatia 2 v. — Alton Locke 1 v. — Hereward the Wake 2 v. — At Last 2 v. — His Letters and Memories of his Life, edited by his Wife 2 v.

Henry Kingsley, † 1876.
Ravenshoe 2 v. — Austin Elliot 1 v. — Geoffry Hamlyn 2 v. — The Hillyars and the Burtons 2 v. — Leighton Court 1 v. — Valentin 1 v. — Oakshott Castle 1 v. — Reginald Hetherege 2 v. — The Grange Garden 2 v.

Albert Kinross.
An Opera and Lady Grasmere 1 v.

Rudyard Kipling.
Plain Tales from the Hills 1 v. — The Second Jungle Book 1 v. — The Seven Seas 1 v. — "Captains Courageous" 1 v. — The Day's Work 1 v. — A Fleet in Being 1 v. — Stalky & Co. 1 v. — From Sea to Sea 2 v. — The City of Dreadful Night 1 v.

May Laffan.
Flitters, Tatters, and the Counsellor, etc. 1 v.

Charles Lamb, † 1834.
The Essays of Elia and Eliana 1 v.

Mary Langdon (Am.).
Ida May 1 v.

Author of "The Last of the Cavaliers" (Miss Piddington).
The Last of the Cavaliers 2 v. — The Gain of a Loss 2 v.

Mme de Laszowska, *vide* E. Gerard.

The Hon. Emily Lawless.
Hurrish 1 v.

George Alfred Laurence, *vide* Author of "Guy Livingstone."

"Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands," *vide* Victoria R. I.

Holme Lee, † 1900, *vide* Harriet Parr.

J. S. Le Fanu, † 1873.
Uncle Silas 2 v. — Guy Deverell 2 v.

Mark Lemon, † 1870.
Wait for the End 2 v. — Loved at Last 2 v. — Falkner Lyle 2 v. — Leyton Hall, and other Tales 2 v. — Golden Fetters 2 v.

Charles Lever, † 1872.
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Robert Lord Lytton (Owen Meredith), † 1891.
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Author of "Mehalah," *vide* Baring-Gould.

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E. Œ. Somerville & Martin Ross.
Naboth's Vineyard 1 v.

Author of "The Spanish Brothers."
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The History of England 7 v. — Reign of Queen Anne 2 v.

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Still Waters 1 v. — Dorothy 1 v. — De Cressy 1 v. — Uncle Ralph 1 v. — Maiden Sisters 1 v. — Martha Brown 1 v. — Vanessa 1 v.

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The House of Martha 1 v.

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William Makepeace Thackeray, † 1863.

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The Garstangs of Garstang Grange 2 v. — A Siren 2 v.

Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens) (Am.).

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Author of "The Two Cosmos."

The Two Cosmos 1 v.

Author of "Venus and Cupid."

Venus and Cupid 1 v.

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Vèra 1 v. — The Hôtel du Petit St. Jean 1 v. — Blue Roses 2 v. — Within Sound of the Sea 2 v. — The Maritime Alps and their Seaboard 2 v. — Ninette 1 v.

Victoria R. I.

Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands from 1848 to 1861 1 v. — More Leaves, etc. from 1862 to 1882 1 v.

Author of "Virginia."

Virginia 1 v.

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D. Mackenzie Wallace.

Russia 3 v.

Lew. Wallace (Am.).

Ben-Hur 2 v.

Eliot Warburton, † 1852.

The Crescent and the Cross 2 v. — Darien 2 v.

Mrs. Humphry Ward.

Robert Elsmere 3 v. — David Grieve 3 v. — Miss Bretherton 1 v. — Marcella 3 v. Bessie Costrell 1 v. — Sir George Tressady 2 v. — Helbeck of Bannisdale 2 v. — Eleanor 2 v.

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Samuel Warren, † 1877.

Diary of a late Physician 2 v. — Ten Thousand a-Year 3 v. — Now and Then 1 v. — The Lily and the Bee 1 v.

Author of "The Waterdale Neighbours," *vide* Justin M^c Carthy.

Theodore Watts-Dunton.

Aylwin 2 v.

H. G. Wells.

The Stolen Bacillus, etc. 1 v. — The War of the Worlds 1 v. — The Invisible Man 1 v. — The Time Machine, and The Island of Doctor Moreau 1 v. — When the Sleeper Wakes 1 v. — Tales of Space and Time 1 v. — The Plattner Story, and Others 1 v. — Love and Mr. Lewisham 1 v.

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Acte 2 v.

Elizabeth Wetherell (Susan Warner) (Am.), † 1885.

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Stanley J. Weyman.

The House of the Wolf 1 v. — The Story of Francis Cludde 2 v. — A Gentleman of France 2 v. — The Man in Black 1 v. — Under the Red Robe 1 v. — My Lady Rotha 2 v. — From the Memoirs of a Minister of France 1 v. — The Red Cockade 2 v. — Shrewsbury 2 v. — The Castle Inn 2 v. — Sophia 2 v.

Author of "A Whim, and its Consequences."

A Whim, and its Consequences 1 v.

Beatrice Whitby.

The Awakening of Mary Fenwick 2 v. — In the Suntime of her Youth 2 v.

Percy White.
Mr. Bailey-Martin 1 v.

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Mrs. J. S. Winter.
Regimental Legends 1 v.

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H. F. Wood.
The Passenger from Scotland Yard 1 v.

Mrs. Henry Wood (Johnny Ludlow), † 1887.
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